

THE **STATE** OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' **SUSTAINABILITY** IN GHANA



STRIVING, SURVIVING OR THRIVING?

A research commissioned by
WEST AFRICA CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE (WACSI)

With support from STAR-GHANA



STAR-Ghana
Strengthening Transparency, Accountability
and Responsiveness in Ghana



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
DANIDA | INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



THE **STATE** OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' **SUSTAINABILITY** IN GHANA STRIVING, SURVIVING OR THRIVING?

A research commissioned by

WEST AFRICA CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE (WACSI)

With support from STAR-GHANA



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
DANIDA INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY **Organisations' Sustainability in Ghana:** **STRIVING, SURVIVING OR THRIVING?**

Research Team

Albert A. Arhin

Mohammed-Anwar Sadat Adam

Achaligabe Colson Akanbasiam

Editorial Team

Ruby Quantson

Nana Afadzinu

Omolara Balogun

Isaac Hubert Arthur

Copyright © WACSI 2015

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the institute except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, write to:

West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)

No. 9, Bingo Street, East Legon

P. O. Box AT 1956, Achimota

Accra, Ghana

E-mail: info@wacsi.org

Tel: +233 (0) 303 937 264

Cite as: WACSI (2015) The State of Civil Society Organisations' Sustainability in Ghana: Striving, Surviving or Thriving? Accra, Ghana

ISBN 978- 9988-1-7775-1

Designed and printed by TYPE Company Limited

ABOUT PARTNERS

About WACSI

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) was created by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) to reinforce the institutional and operational capacities of civil society in the region. WACSI also serves as a resource centre for training, research and documentation, experience sharing and political dialogue for CSOs in West Africa.

www.wacsi.org

Vision

WACSI envisions a West Africa of efficient, effective, and influential civil society functioning as strategic partners for democracy, good governance and sustainable national development.

Mission

WACSI is a not-for-profit organisation that seeks to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of civil society organisations through capacity strengthening programmes for increased and effective policy engagement, and the promotion of development, good governance and democratic values in West Africa.

About STAR-Ghana

STAR-Ghana is a multi-donor fund programme, which addresses the need to increase civil society and parliamentary influence in Ghana to foster better governance of public goods and services. In doing so, it aims to develop efficient and transparent mechanisms, which can link civil society with and to the actions of government, traditional authorities, and private enterprise.

The overall goal of STAR-Ghana is “to increase the accountability and responsiveness of government, traditional authorities and private enterprises to Ghanaian citizens”. Its purpose is “to increase the influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) and Parliament in the governance of public goods and service delivery”.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research is the first fruit of a programme focused on ensuring long-term sustainability for CSOs in West Africa; one that WACSI has envisioned. We are very excited about it and I would like to express our profound appreciation to all those who have contributed through various means to make it possible for us to have this research product.

First, to Taaka Awoori, whose insightful direction helped steer the thinking process behind this research, we are most grateful. Then to Ruby Quantson, who helped review the final draft. For her painstaking work, we say 'thank you'. I will also like to express our appreciation to the research team of Albert A. Arhin, Mohammed-Anwar Sadat Adam, and Achaligabe Colson Akanhasiam whom WACSI commissioned to work on this and who have put together this well researched piece that will be useful for generations to come. Omolara Balogun, WACSI Policy Advocacy Officer and the team including Isaac Hubert Arthur, WACSI Research and Documentation Officer; Trixie Akpedonu, Research and Policy Advocacy Assistant, deserve commendation for their persistence and diligence in seeing this research project through to its expected conclusion.

Finally, to Star Ghana we appreciate the fact that you had the foresight to buy into this vision and hope of sustaining civil society in West Africa, and Ghana in particular, and investing into it by supporting this fundamental research. We trust that this partnership will continue and enable the achievement of our mutual objectives. It is a worthy cause.

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu
Executive Director
WACSI

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BAP	Bolgatanga Area Programme
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CS	Civil Society
CSGF	Civil Society Governance Fund
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSSC	Civil Society Sustainability Checklist
CSSI	Civil Society Sustainability Index
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
EoI	Expression of Interest
EU	European Union
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
GACC	Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INTRAC	International NGO Training, Research and Advocacy Centre
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Centre
IT	Information Technology
KNAP	Kassena Nankana Area Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOGCAF	Northern Ghana Community Action Fund
SEND	Social Enterprise Development
STAR	Strengthening Transparency Accountability & Responsiveness
TNAP	Talensi Nabdam Area Programme
ToR	Terms of Reference
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WACSI	West Africa Civil Society Institute



FOREWORD

It is my great honour to have been asked to write the Foreword for this important Report on “The State of Civil Society Sustainability in Ghana”, in the context of the changing aid and development landscape in Ghana. This Report provides new insights about the sustainability of Civil Society (CS), and makes recommendations on what CS in Ghana must pay attention to if the sector is to remain valuable, and relevant, to Ghana’s future development. The Authors, and Editors, of this report are women and men of considerable knowledge and experience. Together, they they have produced a Report that is of value not only to CS in Ghana, but to all development stakeholders in Africa. I am pleased to be associated with them.

I am equally excited about, and impressed with the Vision and Mission of the West Africa Civil Society Insititute (WACSI) to strengthen the capacity of civil society (CS) in the region, to ensure that the sector is effective in it s role as the third force, after the state and private sector, in the region’s development. As a regional organisation WACSI plays a critical role in ensuring that CS has a regional voice, and presence, to address issues that are regional in nature.

Ghana recently achieved middle income status, and is in the group of the few countries in Sub-Sahara Africa that have made significant improvement in the human development indicators. Ghana has managed to reduce by fifty percent (50%) the number of people living in extreme poverty and improved significantly the number of people with access to clean drinking water and primary education. CS in Ghana has contributed significantly to civic engagement and advocacy to promote and sustain democracy, and is also a major contributor to Ghana’s improved human development indicators. Despite all these impressive achievements, there is still much to be done to address the challenges of: poor governance; regional disparities; high rates of urbanization; growing numbers of unskilled youth; high rates of maternal and child mortality; corruption; and under representation of women in elected leadership. It is for these reasons that CS must critically examine their role, and reflect on the issues of long-term financial existence, operational capacity, identity, impact and unique value, all of which the authors of this study have very eloquently communicated.

My many years of work as a development activist have convinced me that CS is, and will continue to be central to the growth and development of Africa. The “Africa Rising” narrative is incomplete without a vibrant and thriving CS. It has been a great concern of mine that CS sustainability is threatened. Threatened because for far too long we have equated CS sustainability with ability to raise funds. A great deal of time and energy has been spent planning and strategising, on how to best raise funds to support the work of CS. Funds which we would all agree are necessary. My experience tells me, however, that in this never ending pursuit of funding, CS has



stopped asking itself the hard questions. Why do we exist? What is the impact of our work on society? How are we different? Are we credible? Are our organisations efficient and effective? What is our image? This Report reminds us that these are all critical elements of CS sustainability.

Again, I commend WACSI for commissioning this report, and it gives me great pleasure to be associated with it. A Report that provides practical and realistic suggestions for building a sustainable CS sector in Ghana is most welcome, and timely.

Ambassador Elkanah Odembo

Country Director, CARE International in Ghana.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was commissioned by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) to explore the status of civil society (CS) sustainability in the context of the changing aid and development landscape in Ghana. The report captures the views, perceptions, opinions, fears, anxiety, excitement and the hopes of CS in relation to the current development landscape and operating space in Ghana. The report also throws light on how CS in Ghana are grappling with profound questions about their future, purpose and role in socio-economic development, as well as their legitimacy, recognition and visibility, operations, relationships and funding in Ghana. The report further tells the story of the mutable meanings of sustainability, the perceived present state of sustainability, the diverse challenges threatening sustainability of CS, the different strategies being employed by CS to ensure that they are sustainable and the roles that government and pool-funding mechanisms can play for CS in Ghana. The methodology for the study involved a combination of an online survey together with interviews and conversations with a wide range of actors within the civil society fraternity and beyond. Some of the key messages from this research have been highlighted hereunder:

The context and landscape of civil society is changing

Civil society groups in Ghana have grown in number and importance. Similarly, the context, dynamics and landscape for civil society is changing in notable ways. The six free and elections held since 1992 and the relative political stability, Ghana's production and exportation of oil since 2010, the country's re-classification as a lower middle income country have all changed the way civil society operates in Ghana. Other factors are the reported achievement of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) one of halving population in extreme poverty, the post-MDG sustainable development agenda, the re-prioritisation of traditional donors as well as the changing global economic and geopolitical power including the rise of Brazil and China and the role of technology in altering traditional funding models. These and many other developments are gradually affecting how civil society remains sustainable financially, operationally and institutionally.

Civil society sustainability is increasingly becoming an important discussion point.

Traditionally, civil society in Ghana had largely relied on donations and external funding, which came from development partners, private trusts, foundations and philanthropies, governments, the United Nations, individual donors, religious institutions, and, in many cases, other grant-making NGOs. The context of that development landscape is changing with a drop in donor funding from the traditional sources in support of CS work, creating both opportunities and challenges. This raises serious questions and discussions about the future role and sustainability of civil society in Ghana.

Civil society sustainability is a holistic construct which goes beyond availability of funds.

While civil society sustainability is gaining traction, the term appears to be a black-box that means different things for different people. Many see sustainability largely in terms of availability of funds. However, our findings suggest that civil society and CSOs need more than funding in order to be sustainable. Sustainability is more than just availability of funds and goes beyond survivability. A framework of understanding sustainability could be examined from four different dimensions: financial (the continuous availability of financial resources), operational (capacity, technical resources and administrative structures to operate programmes), identity (the long-term existence of organisations themselves) and in relation to interventions (the continuity of results, impact of specific projects after its completion or funding ends). Therefore looking at civil society sustainability involves focusing on financial soundness, functionality of operations, institutional health and sustenance of impact from interventions.

The findings of the study also suggest that engaging with questions about the state of civil society sustainability involves getting a glimpse of at least 15 different criteria: income mobilisation and generation, financial planning, sound financial management systems (for financial sustainability), recognition and visibility, operating space, institutional capacity and infrastructure, influential power, quality and continuity of service and programmes (for operational sustainability), relevance of mission, governance and leadership, legitimacy and accountable systems, policy and regulatory environment (for identity sustainability), ownership of projects, partnership and results communications (for interventions sustainability).

The overall state of civil society sustainability is challenging

By assigning scores against the four dimensions of sustainability, the 15 criteria and 51 specific indicative questions, we worked out the Civil Society Sustainable Index (CSSI), demonstrating the overall picture of the context in which CS and CSOs are operating. The series of questions and computation were assessed against four (4) response alternatives or scales: (1) Not sustainable (2) Challengeably Sustainable (3) Satisfactorily sustainable and (4) Strongly sustainable. Respondents from each organisation scored the 51 indicative questions from 1 to 4 on the basis of their own reflections, experiences and judgment. The average score for each dimension of sustainability was calculated by aggregating all the responses. The final composite score which represents the overall state of sustainability is therefore an aggregation of all the four dimensions.

Our findings lead to the conclusion that the state of civil society sustainability in Ghana remains challenging. The CSSI for this study showed an overall composite score of 2.7. The score indicates that sustainability of civil society is quite far from satisfactory with several organisations currently just surviving and struggling to thrive. This challenging state is not necessarily as a result of 'persecution' or obvious 'harassment' from



government as some reports call attention to (PRIA et al, 2012; CIVICUS, 2014). Rather, the challenging situation is a product of complex interactions and effects of funds availability, operations, identity and interventions on the civil society landscape in Ghana.

In terms of financial sustainability, we found an extremely challenging situation for many civil society organisations. Finance has been found to be the most pressing and challenging aspect of sustainability. The conclusions reached suggest that CS in Ghana is under intense pressure to operate, survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive and dwindling funding environment. This is reflected in the computation of the various responses on the state of financial sustainability of civil society, which yielded an average index of 2.4. This figure falls short of the sustainable state envisaged by many of the respondents. Income mobilization and generation received a very challenging score (score=2.3), financial planning was even more challenging (score=2) while sound financial management systems received a satisfactorily score (score=3). Interestingly, while many CSOs are witnessing reductions in traditional donor funding and therefore seeking alternative sources, overcoming dependency on external (donor) sources remains a daunting challenge.

In terms of operational sustainability, civil society organisations face an equally challenging situation. The computation of the state of operational sustainability showed an average index of 2.6, which depicts a challenging and less-than-satisfactory state for CS to continue their operations. The most basic conclusion reached here is that, in addition to the competitive funding environment, it is also equally challenging for several CSOs to continue to execute their programmes in the changing development landscape. This results partly from the fact that institutional capacity and infrastructure to sustain programmes in the medium to long-term looks challenging (score=2.3). Maintaining quality and continuity of programmes and projects in the changing development landscape also received a challenging score (score=2.3). Again, the general recognition and visibility of programmes of several entities was rated less than satisfactory (score=2.6) although the influential power of civil society was however rated satisfactory (score=3). In terms of the operating space for programmes and projects to continue, the findings suggest a near-satisfactory score (score=2.8).

Many CSOs are struggling to sustain results and impacts of interventions (score=2.7). This puts the sustainability of interventions in a very challenging state. The findings however suggest that many organisations are making significant progress in building partnerships and networks (score=3) and ensuring ownership of projects (score=3). Yet, communication of the results of interventions received a less than satisfactory score (score=2). This could be one area where CSOs can focus in moving towards sustainability.

Yet, CS is still a vibrant and evolving space. The overall conclusion of the study shows that in spite of the challenging nature of fund-raising and operations, CS as a sector

would continue to exist and thrive to contribute towards solving societal problems. This is reflected in the remarkable score of 3.2 achieved during the computation of the CSSI on identity and continuous existence of organisations. There is therefore a perceptible sense that with relevant missions, operating space generally favourable and legitimate support from various constituents, CS will survive even if thriving proves very difficult.

Different organisations are experiencing sustainability differently

While the general trend suggested a challenging development landscape for civil society organisations, the study also noted that different organisations are experiencing the challenges of sustainability differently. Generally, four distinguishable categories of civil society organisations were observed: the 'Strivors', the 'Survivors', the 'Thrivors' and the 'sustainable' organisations. 'Strivors' are those that had most of their responses clustered around 'not sustainable'. Among other things, this group of organisations are facing extreme difficulty to generate and mobilise revenues; they are unable or struggle to keep sound financial management systems; struggling for recognition and visibility and struggling to continue with the implementation of programmes. They are also significantly challenged by weak operating space, weak institutional capacity and infrastructure and further struggling to sustain their legitimacy and accountability profiles.

The 'survivors' refer to the respondents that had most of their responses to the checklist clustered around 'challengeably sustainable'. Although these organisations may have programmes running normally they are quite challenged in many ways in generating and mobilising revenues from diverse sources especially in the long term; They may be relying significantly on restricted sources of income. They recognise and may have attempted to keep sound financial management systems but such systems may not be strictly followed; they may be visible and recognised by other stakeholders. They may have a good capacity in their sector but face significant institutional deficits in terms of human resources, assets and equipment. Survivors are not necessary struggling for recognition and visibility but continuity and quality of programmes stand to be affected in the long term as this depends on a host of external factors such as funding. This means that several of the survivors are likely to survive on project-by-project basis.

The 'thrivors' refer to those respondents that had most of their responses to the checklist clustered around 'satisfactorily sustainable'. They may have a balanced mix of internally and externally generated funds, restricted and unrestricted and short-term and long-term. They may have sound financial management systems that are strictly followed including annual audits and annual reports. They may have a very good capacity in their sector with significant improvement and availability of human resources, assets, equipment and tools. It may not be excessively difficult for thrivors to sustain quality and continuity of service and programmes. They may command a



credible legitimacy even though accountability profiles might still need improvement. Governance and leadership of such organisations may be well constituted with operations governed by clear separation between Board of Directors and management. They may have a strong influential power in their sector and sphere of operations; make significant efforts for projects to be owned by its beneficiaries and a timely and relevant mission.

The 'sustainable' refers to those respondents that had most of their responses clustered around 'very sustainable'. They are financially sound, operationally functional, and institutionally robust and have brighter prospects to significantly generate their own sources of income to complement other donor and external income. The sustainable scored 'very sustainable' on the indicators used on income mobilisation and generation, financial planning, sound financial management systems, recognition and visibility, operating space, institutional capacity and infrastructure, influential power, quality and continuity of service and programmes, relevance of mission, governance and leadership, legitimacy and accountable systems, policy and regulatory environment, ownership of projects, partnership and results communications.

Several organisations are developing diverse strategies to be sustainable

Some of the specific challenges that currently threaten sustainability include the over-reliance on donors particularly single sources of funds. Others are the changing aid dynamics which have resulted in drops in funding to CSOs; the limited utilisation of ICTs potentials; the limited communication about impacts and results of projects and the general low investment in transparent and accountable systems. Difficulty in maintaining competent human resource, perceived corruption, politicisation and partisan labelling are other factors that threaten the sustainability of CSOs.

Reassuringly, the study noted that several organisations are employing diverse strategies in order to survive and thrive in the changing dynamics. These include joining networks, building alliances and coalitions, diversification and 'hedging' of financial resources. Other strategies involve developing business- minded approaches, credibility building and policy influencing skills, adopting diverse cost-cutting measures as well as formalised collaborations and partnerships with other entities including private sector.

The study further considered the potentials and limits of multi-donor pool mechanisms such as the STAR-GHANA mechanism as a way of ensuring sustainability. What emerges is that STAR-Ghana, and similar basket-pool mechanisms, will have a significant role to play in advancing the course of civil society sustainability, particularly in the changing development landscape. Yet, it was also gathered that funding mechanisms such as STAR-Ghana have serious limits and may even create new difficulties for civil society sustainability. There is the challenge of perceived discriminatory tendencies against 'small' CSOs, excessive selection criteria and the general focus on short-term project support.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the state of sustainability of CS in Ghana can be described as very challenging but one that is not too gloomy to cause mass extinction of organisations in the sector. The following recommendations have been proposed for building a sustainable CS sector (actors and organisations) in Ghana.

1. Diversification of financial resources

In order to remain sustainable, diversification of financial resources should engage the minds of CSOs in Ghana. In addition to the traditional donors, the following broad sources of funds are recommended.

- **Explore domestic resource mobilisation:** Financial resources for development can be mobilized from domestic sources. Regular contributions and transfers from supporters, members and constituents (for instance through mobile money transfers) can be a starting point for several organisations. Other mobilisation channels can include but not limited to actively seeking cash donations from individuals including wealthy and middle-income earners as well as the general public who might donate through collection boxes placed at local businesses or other vantage points.
- **Explore crowd-funding and online fund-raising platforms:** Crowd funding is an emerging marketplace where charities and individuals work collectively to pool money together on behalf of a cause, project or business. Examples of crowd funding platforms that CSOs in Ghana can explore include 'GlobalGiving', 'Change.org' and 'JustGive'.
- **Experiment with Diaspora philanthropy:** The diaspora community, whether individuals or in associations, are often looking for different ways and avenues to contribute to development projects in their home countries. Monetary transfers—including philanthropy and remittances—constitute only one element of how persons in the diaspora contribute to their countries of origin. Technology transfer, intellectual contributions, advocacy and results communications are some of the means through which the diaspora community contributes to development. The onus lies on leadership of CSOs to make connections and contacts to these untapped resources to generate the necessary financial and technical capacity that might contribute to their sustainability.
- **Explore social enterprises:** In a sector reliant on constant fundraising, sustainable funding is indeed a crucial issue. Social enterprises offer another prospective channel for CSOs to diversify resources, generate additional income and remain sustainable.
- **Consider setting up profit-based subsidiary enterprises:** One way through which CSOs can further raise financial resources to support their operations involve setting up subsidiary enterprises or commercial ventures that they own and run.

These enterprises can either be self-standing commercial enterprises with clear profit-orientation or complementary for-profit enterprises with developmental goals embedded in it such as the high street shops operated by Oxfam.

2. Institutionalisation of structures and practices of good governance are valuable

In building blocks for sustainability, CSOs should not only be upwardly accountable to donors and governments– those that provide them with their financial and legal base, but also downwardly accountable to their beneficiaries, inwardly accountable to themselves for their organisational mission, values, and staff and horizontally accountable to their peers. Additionally, both small and large CSOs, networks, coalitions, NGOs and professional bodies, should prioritised sound financial management practices; human resource systems and structures and basic governance structures. Such systems enhance credibility, trustworthiness, legitimacy and recognition, which are critically needed in the changing funding mechanisms.

3. Invest in capacity building even in the face of dwindling funds

The importance of institutional capacity has also been stressed in this report as far as sustainability of programmes and longer-term existence of organisations are concerned. A sustainable CSO is one, which is not just surviving but is healthy and has the capacity to remain resilient to pursue its primary goal and mission in the face of a changing development landscape. Even in the face of financial difficulties, new competencies, skills and knowledge are required in several aspects of the organisation including fund-raising, visibility, policy influencing, constituency, recognition and support, legitimacy and partnership formation. CSOs should therefore invest in building the capacity of dedicated staff in these areas.

4. Provide a periodic health check on relevance, mission and programmes

The CSO sector is very dynamic and always going through systematic and paradigmatic shifts and trends. Over the years, the sector has witnessed a shift from relief to service provision and now an increasing focus on advocacy and rights-based approaches to development. The sector has also witnessed a shift in focus from increased fixation on individuals to communities and to societies as a whole. Remaining relevant is in itself a building block for sustainability. CSOs should therefore do periodic reflections and health checks to determine the relevance of their mission and programmes at particular points in time.

5. Share results broadly and invest in visibility

In the changing development landscape, organisations that remain visible in terms of impacts and influence are likely to attract funding that could make huge strides towards sustainability. CSOs should therefore cultivate a culture of communicating results of programmes and their impact. To this end, relevant publications such as annual reports, active engagement in social media such as Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn will be important.

6. Enhancing quality of service delivery

It is recommended that to enhance quality of service of delivery, CSOs need to move from delivering general services to strategic services. While general services have been assessed to be the most crucial to sustain the life and livelihoods of target beneficiaries, they also tend to reinforce the welfare and service-provision perception of CSOs. The short and long-term sustainability of these services is suspect, as the funding is in short supply. Moreover, CSOs may not necessarily have comparative advantages in providing the specific services that they are currently offering. It is recommended that CSOs move beyond basic service to functions in which the organisations have (or can acquire) comparative and competitive advantages.

A key element in enhancing quality of service delivery is the need for CSOs to transform the system of planning, resource mobilisation and management to results. This entails a four-step system:

- Development of basic systems and procedures for planning that is based on membership needs as well as other strategic considerations.
- Budgeting based on the needs and capacity of the organisation
- Establishment of a system of results-oriented monitoring and evaluation.
- Staff training to cope with changes in organisational status, needs and orientations.

7. Enhancing influential power

Direct policy influence by CSOs is intrinsically related to the strength of national “umbrella” bodies be it in the form of coalitions, networks and/or platforms. In Ghana, GAPVOD was formed in the 1990s to serve such purpose as well as provide training services for the voluntary sector. GAPVOD however lacked the convening mandate from the NGOs and was unable to garner sufficient legitimacy to speak with one voice for all CSOs. Although Church or faith-based umbrella bodies such the Catholic Bishops Conference/National Catholic Secretariat, the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Muslim Council have been influential and have greater convening powers, they are not always able to carry their members along when they wish, especially when they take strong stance in policy and political debates. It is recommended that CSOs consider building strategic alliances with non-formalized influential actors who have established reputation as well as leading local and international NGOs and institutions in the public sector. A number of alliances will have to be cultivated and developed in the medium to long-term. Three of such proposed alliances are alliance to acquire organisational development expertise; alliance for policy advocacy; and alliances with faith-based organisations

8. Leadership matters

Leadership must be part of serious debates about the sustainability of CSOs. This is because when leadership is weak, uninspiring, indecisive, unmotivated, non-charismatic and myopic, there is a greater chance that such organisations will fail to



survive, let alone thrive. CSOs should invest in inspirational and visionary leaders with an understanding of the changing development landscape so as to drive their missions in a way that is relevant in contemporary terms. Leadership of CSOs should also be abreast with the total health of their organisations including projections, budgets, and general trends in financial performance. In this way, actions can be redirected in a more sustainable way.

9. Strategic Alliances with private sector can be invaluable

Private sector firms are currently pursuing a wide range of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes rooted in the social and developmental mission of several CSOs in Ghana. This is a great opportunity for CS to enhance their sustainability by leveraging on the wealth of the private sector through mutually benefitting strategic alliances and partnership. CSO-private firm partnership can also contribute to sustainability in a number of ways. These can include capacity building and trainings for CSOs in areas such as marketing and visibility, free auditing of financial statements, financial planning and many more. It can further help CSOs to provide crucial services and interventions to communities through CSR without necessarily engaging in long-term development programmes.

10. Planning for sustainability is key

Just as CSOs are investing in strategic plans, there should also be conscious planning for sustainability of CSOs which take into consideration emerging threats, mitigation options, and capacity building. CSOs should consider how programmes can be sustained and the kind of investments that are required for longer term sustainability. Diversification of resources and revenue generation ventures should remain an important starting point for sustaining CSOs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement	6
List of Acronyms	7
Foreword	8
Executive Summary	10
Table of Contents	19
List of Tables	22
List of Figures	22
List of Annexes	22
1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Background of Research	24
1.2 Sensing the Change? Civil Society and the Changing Development Landscape in Ghana	25
1.3 Research Questions and Objectives of Study	28
1.4 Structure of the Report	28
2. METHODOLOGY AND STUDY APPROACH	
2.1 Research Design	32
2.2. Data Collection	32
2.2.1 Secondary Data and Literature Review	32
2.2.2 Key informant and expert interviews	33
2.2.3 Survey and semi-structured discussions	33
2.3 The Demography of Respondents	35
2.4 Limitations, Challenges and Reflections about the Methodology	36
3. MUTABLE MEANINGS OF CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY	
3.1 Civil Society Sustainability: What does it really mean?	38
3.1.1 Civil Society Sustainability is a Process rather than an end	38
3.1.2 Civil Society sustainability is more than survivability	39
3.1.3 Civil society sustainability is holistic and goes beyond just availability of funds	39



3.2 Exploring the State of Civil Society Sustainability: Dimensions, Criteria and Indicators	40
--	----

3.2.1 Financial Sustainability	42
--------------------------------	----

3.2.2. Operational Sustainability	42
-----------------------------------	----

3.2.3 Identity Sustainability	43
-------------------------------	----

3.2.4 Interventions Sustainability	43
------------------------------------	----

4. THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY IN GHANA

4.1 Sustainability of Civil Society in Ghana: The Overall Picture	46
---	----

4.2 Financial Sustainability	47
------------------------------	----

4.2.1 Income Generation and Mobilization	48
--	----

4.2.2 Financial Planning	50
--------------------------	----

4.2.3 Sound financial management systems	51
--	----

4.3 Operational Sustainability	52
--------------------------------	----

4.4 Identity Sustainability	58
-----------------------------	----

4.5 Interventions Sustainability	62
----------------------------------	----

5. CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY

5.1. Over-reliance on Donors and Changing Aid Dynamics	66
--	----

5.2. Limited utilisation of ICTs potentials	66
---	----

5.3. Limited communication about impacts and results of projects	66
--	----

5.4. Low investment in transparent and accountable systems	67
--	----

5.5. The Challenge of Maintaining Competent Human Resource	67
--	----

5.6. Perceived Corruption and Lack of Trust	68
---	----

5.7. Politicisation and Partisan Labelling	68
--	----

6. STRATEGIES, INNOVATIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE

70

7. CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE CSOs IN GHANA: CAN MULTI-POOL FUNDING MECHANISMS BE THE KEY?

7.1 Star-Ghana: Perspectives on the Mechanism	74
7.1.1 Financial and Technical Support	74
7.1.2 Focusing Interventions on Priority Areas	75
7.1.3 Controls Supervision of CSOs	75
7.2 Star Ghana: A Half-full or a Half - empty Glass?	76
7.2.1 Discriminatory Tendencies Against 'Smaller' CSOs	76
7.2.2 Prohibitory Selection Criteria	77
7.2.3 Short-Term Project Support	77
7.2.4 Limited Scope of Funding Windows	78

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusions and Recommendations	80
8.2 Recommendations	80
8.2.1 Diversification of Financial Resources	80
8.2.2 Institutionalisation of Structures and Practices of Good Governance are Valuable	82
8.2.3 Invest in Capacity Building even in the Face of Dwindling Funds	82
8.2.4. Conduct a periodic health check on relevance, mission and programmes	83
8.2.5. Share results broadly and invest in visibility	83
8.2.6. Enhancing quality of service delivery	83
8.2.7. Enhancing influential power	84
8.2.8 Leadership Matters!	84
8.2.9 Strategic Alliances with private sector can be invaluable	84
8.2.10. Planning for Sustainability is key	85

PART TWO:

LEARNING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY: THREE CASES	86
--	----



Case 1: Sustaining through subsidiary profit-based enterprises: The case of Afrikids	87
Case 2: Sustaining through social enterprise: The case of Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition	94
Case 3: Sustaining through Social Enterprise and Micro-credits: The Case of SEND Ghana.	96
Synthesis and Discussion: Three Models of CSO (Financial) Sustainability Strategy	101
References	106

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Interpretation of CSSI	34
---------------------------------	----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure1: The wheel of sustainability	41
Figure 2 Spider Diagram of the State of Sustainability of CSOs	46
Figure 3: Financial sustainability	47
Figure 4: Sustainability of sources of funds	49
Figure 5: Confidence and sustainability of using ICT to raise funds	50
Figure 6: Sustaining capacity to raise funds	51
Figure 7: Sustaining sound financial management systems	52
Figure 8 Operational Sustainability	53
Figure 9. Sustaining the cost of maintaining physical office	56
Figure 10: Continuity and sustenance of quality of programmes after current funding ends	57
Figure 11: State of Identity Sustainability	58
Figure 12: Status of sustainability of interventions	62
Figure 13 Actual total income for Afrikids (2004-2013)	90
Figure 14 Percentage of unrestricted funds (of total income) 2011-2013	93

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1. About the Authors	111
Annex 2. Computation of CSSI	112

01

GENERAL INTRODUCTION





➡ 1.1. Background of Research

Ghana has had a long tradition and history of civil society presence dating back to at least the 17th Century when the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS), the Gold Coast Youth League (GCYL), the Fante Confederation and many others were formed as champions of justice for the vulnerable and marginalized local communities in the colonial era. However, the post-independence era several of these civil society groups became wings of political parties. The period, characterized by limited freedoms, also saw the weakening of civil society engagements. This was partly due to attempts by successive governments to build a post-colonial state devoid of division. It was not until the return to democracy in 1992 that civil society organisations began to boom and flourish.

Today, civil society groups have grown in number and importance; they do not only serve as incubators of political, social and economic ideas in the promotion of good governance but are also deliverers of public goods particularly in disadvantaged areas of the country. Civil society effectively complements efforts of the state and the private sector to pursue and sustain social, political and economic development. The state creates an enabling environment; the private sector contributes in generating jobs and income, while civil society facilitates better delivery of goods and services as well as social interaction by mobilising groups to participate in poverty reduction, economic, social and political activities.

The early 1990s ushered in a particular hunger for activities of CSOs. On the global scene, several changes occurred that created an enabling environment for civil society. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the rise of democracy particularly following the end of the Soviet Union and the return to democratic governance in several developing countries such as Ghana after several years of dictatorship were inspiring occurrences. The rising poverty levels, the massive drive for globalisation and international trade as well as the introduction of Human Development Index (HDI) as a new lens for economic growth, all provided the breeding grounds for the expansion of a third estate outside the governments and private sector—civil society—to pursue what appeared to be a new agenda for socio-economic development. Invariably, there was a renaissance of the concept, practice and meaning of civil society in this period. In view of this new resurgence, civil society began to be heard more loudly, seen quite frequently, talked and written about extensively around the world (Florini, 2000; Hawken, 2007; PRIA et al, 2012). At the same time, the frustrations of donors in relation to the slow pace of change despite their significant investments in several countries saw their direct intervention in the work of non-profit organisations and civil society broadly.

It must be mentioned here that civil society (CS) is a contentious term, without a common definition. However, one of the most common understandings of the term is given by CIVICUS as: the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests (CIVICUS, 2014; PRIA et al, 2012). CSOs are all those bodies

that act in this arena. It includes a variety of NGOs, networks, coalitions but excludes firms with profit-making motives as well as organisations seeking political power. The arena for CS is very fluid and dynamic with groups and individuals regularly moving in and out of it, and operating within civil society and other spheres simultaneously (PRIA et al, 2012).

CS, as employed in this report, is therefore not a homogeneous group. They vary in size, function, mission, vision and culture. By virtue of their operational focus, CS in Ghana may be classified as international, national and grassroots or local. They can also be identified as intermediaries, networks and federations, or grassroots movements of various kinds. Additionally, CS in Ghana may be involved mainly in national level advocacy, or they may work directly with communities in delivering services or have an intermediate function whereby they largely assist grassroots or local organisations to help their members or communities. They also play multiple roles including service deliverers, advocates and facilitators. CS in all its forms include non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, women's groups, youth networks, international non-governmental organisations working with broad-based partners at the local (community) levels, professional associations and bodies, trade unions among others.

In spite of these nuances, CS has generally been considered as consisting of independent institutions that are able to transcend narrow and selfish interests in order to promote universal values for the general good of the society. Over the years, CS has emerged as a key stakeholder in development processes of Ghana and elsewhere. CSOs are very active and influential in sectors such as education, health and governance and environment. They are also very instrumental in areas such as poverty reduction, human rights, gender empowerment, youth development and many others. CS continues to play a critical role in promoting sustainable development, by enabling citizens to empower themselves and actively seek effective performance and accountability from the state and the private sector.

➡ 1.2 Sensing the Change? Civil Society and the Changing Development Landscape in Ghana

The wave of resurgence of CS in the 1990s also blew in Ghana. The country's return to its 4th republic democracy in 1992 and her new poise to drive socio-economic development all facilitated the growth and spread of CS. The international aid system thus saw massive possibility of increasing financial support to facilitate the processes of democratisation and liberalisation that could overcome poverty and marginalisation and also advance socio-economic development particularly in the areas of improving access to social services such as education, health and water and many others.

Today, CS in Ghana continues to grow and evolve. As of 2011, there were over 4,920 CSOs registered in Ghana, (Ghanaian Times News story, 2011), although the number



of active organisations is generally estimated to lie between 1500 and 2,000. The contribution of the CS sector to Ghana's democratic development and consolidation has been significant. CSOs have played a crucial role in transforming Ghana from militarism and authoritarianism to the current and widely acclaimed democratic growth and stability. Atuguba (2013) highlights some of the specific contributions as: (1) Initiating policies which are approved by Cabinet and passed into law by the Parliament; (2) Holding public officers accountable for the use of public resources; (3) Performing a critical role in mobilising social capital for development activities; (4) Articulating citizens' interests and demands and defending citizens' rights; (5) Advocating for the equitable distribution of national resources; (6) Mediating between the State and citizen groups about contentious issues; (7) Nurturing peace and security; and (8) Providing goods and services to mostly unreached segments of the population amongst others.

While the sector is generally growing, the operations and activities of civil society however depend largely on donations and external funding which can come from development partners, private trusts, foundations and philanthropies, governments, the United Nations, individual donors, religious institutions, and, in many cases, other NGOs (Edwards, 2009). In the last few years, the landscape of development and the CS sector has seen a gradual change. While one must be careful in establishing a date or a year signifying this important turning point, it is believed that most of the changes occurring are products of both local and current global processes. Few of the trends changing the landscape of development and the civil society sector are highlighted hereunder.

In 2009, Ghana witnessed its second successful democratic handover of power since democracy was restored in 1992. The six free and fair elections held since 1992 and its concomitant political stability as well as a decade of sustained economic growth have contributed meaningfully to poverty reduction in Ghana—at least in economic terms. A notable annual economic growth rate of about 8 percent over the past five years has been supported by strong improvements in economic freedoms. In 2007, Ghana discovered oil in commercial quantities and production started in 2010. Driven largely by the production and exportation of the oil, Ghana saw the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country rising to about 14% in 2010, from a previous average of 7% (Government of Ghana, 2012). As of 2014, a combination of challenges related to fiscal management, currency depreciation and a shortfall in national revenue projections have seen a massive decline in GDP growth resulting in the government turning to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance.

Ghana's recent recalculation of its GDP in 2010 also led to an overnight graduation from a poor country to a Lower Middle Income Country (LMIC) with a per capita income of about \$1,300 (Moss and Majerowicz, 2012). These developments have informed

a new thinking and relationship between Ghana and her development partners. In 2010, the Consultative Meeting (a high level meeting between representatives of the Government of Ghana, development partners and civil society organisations) concluded that the Government of Ghana and its development partners should envisage an aid free Ghana within the next 5-10 years. Consequently, a Compact was signed in 2012 between Ghana's government and the major development partners with the aim of channelling development assistance to critical sectors till 2020 when Ghana is expected to be 'aid-free' country (Netherlands Strategic Plan, 2012). The Compact places full financial responsibility on the Ghana government to invest in accelerated development to reduce poverty and inequality, and has paved way for many development partners to put in place 'exit' strategies (DFID, 2013).

These developments come with both challenges and opportunities. Significant among these is the fact that the volume of donor funding which has been instrumental in advancing the course of civil society is expected to drop significantly. Some donors are re-prioritising, retreating and even significantly reducing funds. Questions about how CSOs that have traditionally relied so much on donor funding will continue to operate and adapt to the ever changing development landscape is a recurring topic discussed in many forums and platforms.

At the global level, there is growing literature, commentaries and discussions emphasising that the general development landscape, aid dynamics and global power relations are changing in very notable ways. This is having an enormous effects CSOs around the world. New forms and functions particularly social media - inspired - citizen protests and actions are all expanding across different parts of the world. At the same time, some countries such as Libya are seeing new spaces while in other areas the spaces for engagements for civil society are closing down (PRIA et al, 2012). There is growing income inequality across countries at a time formerly poor countries are becoming lower-middle income. New class of wealthy and growing middle class is also emerging in many of these contexts where inequality is getting worse. World leaders are currently fashioning out what has become known as post-2015 MDG agenda that will provide the framework for action to spur socio-economic development. Even more importantly, the impacts of the global financial crisis in Europe and North America since about 2008, the growing influence of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), the emergence of new economic blocs such as MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey) and the growing private-philanthropy in international development are all changing the dynamics and funding patterns of the work of civil society globally.

A recent report from the World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2013) also emphasised the changing economic and geopolitical power and the role of technology as elements changing the nature and ways through which CS operates. These and many other developments are gradually affecting how civil society remains sustainable



financially as well as in terms of their structure, efficacy, legitimacy, and ability to operate freely. Yet, our understanding of whether the gains that have been made by CS will be sustained and whether the CS sector will be a thriving sector in five, ten or twenty years from now with the ability to hold government and the private sector accountable and make their own contributions to development is still uncertain. It is on this basis that this study set out to explore the perspectives of CS about their perceptions about challenges, opportunities and the general state of their sustainability.

➡ 1.3 Research Questions and Objectives of Study

In tandem with the Terms of Reference (TOR) for this study, the research sought to collect and document information, review existing literature and expatiate on the different sustainability challenges confronting CSOs in Ghana. The main research questions were:

- a. What does sustainability mean to civil society in Ghana?
- b. What is the “state of sustainability” of civil society in Ghana?
- c. What are the relevant criteria to measure the sustainability of Ghanaian civil society?
- d. What are the key challenges threatening the sustainability of civil society in Ghana?
- e. How does the sustainability of civil society organisations impact their work?
- f. What are the different sustainability strategies that civil society organisations are using in Ghana?

Consequently, the main objectives of the study are as follows:

- a. To explore the diverse meanings of sustainability to/for civil society in Ghana;
- b. Examine the “state of sustainability” of civil society in Ghana;
- c. Identify relevant criteria to measure the sustainability of Ghanaian civil society;
- d. Identify key challenges threatening the sustainability of civil society in Ghana;
- e. Determine how the sustainability of civil society organisations impact their work;
- f. Collate different sustainability strategies that civil society organisations are using in Ghana;

➡ 1.4 Structure of the Report

This report has been organised around eight distinct but interrelated sections in tandem with the research objectives and the terms of reference. Following this introduction, the next section outlines the methodology for the study. This is followed by a discussion of sustainability as understood in the context of this research. We then discuss findings on the state of sustainability of civil society in Ghana followed by a



brief outline of challenges threatening the sustainability of civil society. The succeeding section focuses on some of the strategies being adopted. The next section focuses on the roles, limits and potentials of multi-donor pooling mechanisms such as STAR-Ghana before turning attention to conclusions and recommendations. The second part of the report discusses three models and cases of sustainability approaches that can be considered by CSOs in building thriving and sustainable entities in the foreseeable future.

02

METHODOLOGY AND STUDY APPROACH



➡ 2.1 Research Design

This study was designed as an exploratory research with the intention to understand rather than to test a particular hypothesis. It combined qualitative methods and elements of quantitative research approach for the data collection, analysis and the conclusions reached for this report. The data collection exercise for this report occurred in December 2014 and January 2015. The study combined an online survey with interviews and conversations with a wide range of actors within the civil society fraternity and beyond to enable us detect patterns and homogeneity of expressions in relation to the state of sustainability of CS. Conversations and interviews with actors within the civil society fraternity offered a useful method and approach to achieve the research assignment. As several studies have shown (e.g. Patton, 1990; Creswell et al, 2007), informal interviews enable respondents to open up and discuss even sensitive issues, give respondents time and opportunities to develop their answers and makes respondents feel at ease in the interview and so are more likely to provide useful data. We paid particular attention to the depth and spread of responses rather than the quantitative representation of the respondents.

➡ 2.2. Data Collection

➡ 2.2.1 Secondary Data and Literature Review

The study began with a desk review of commentaries, publications, blogs and general literature on the state and models of civil society sustainability across the world. Considering that a number of secondary data already exists about sustainability of civil society in the changing development landscape (GACC et al, 2014; Darkwa, Amponsah & Gyampoh, 2006; Lewis, Boateng and Hayman, 2015; PRIA et al, 2012; CIVICUS, 2015; CIVICUS, 2014; USAID, 2013), the literature review involved an in-depth but focused review of case studies of civil society sustainability models; strengths and limitations of existing CSO sustainability indices (such as the USAID's CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa and CIVICUS publications on the state of civil society; USAID, 2012; 2013; 2014) ; trends and dynamics of the landscape in which CSOs operate in Ghana; how sustainability has been defined by different voices and what indicators better capture these voices; perceptions of potentials, challenges and projected threats to civil society sustainability (PRIA et al, 2012; CIVICUS, 2013); the contribution of international and local development interventions and mechanisms such as GRAP, RAVI and STAR-Ghana and how their existence might have affected operations of civil society organisations in Ghana. The review provided strong background information and further informed the development of a checklist of questions and indicators from which the state of sustainability was assessed. The checklist (referred herein as Civil Society Sustainability Checklist) was also used to create an online survey.

2.2.2 Key Informant and Expert Interviews

In order to obtain further insights about the dynamics of the state of sustainability in Ghana, key informant and expert interviews were also employed. Key informant interviews have been particularly useful for collecting information from a wide range of people who have in-depth knowledge and experience about a phenomenon under study (Gilchrist, 1992; Kumar, 1989). The target informants for this study were senior development practitioners who have played diverse roles in the civil society sector in various positions over the past 15 years or so. We therefore consider these informants as having relevant in-depth knowledge about CSOs operations in Ghana. These conversations were tape-recorded and key themes and messages teased out to complement the survey. Some of the informants were drawn from organisations such as the WACSI, the Catholic Secretariat and STAR-Ghana.

2.2.3 Survey and Semi-structured Discussions

The Civil Society Sustainability Checklist (CSSC) was made up of two parts: a qualitative component to facilitate conversations as well as a Likert-scale style of 51 questions about different dimensions of sustainability. The CSSC was used as a self-assessment questionnaire. A combination of approaches was used in circulating the CSSC to respondents including emails, face-to-face administration and also through an online survey. It was the responses from the CSSC that were quantified to create the Civil Society Sustainability Index (CSSI) discussed in this report.

As explained in section 3, the conceptualisation of sustainability in the context of this research had (4) dimensions (financial, operational, identity and interventions). Each dimension comprised of several sub-dimensions, which in turn were composed of a number of individual indicative questions. Each of the sustainability indicative questions on the CSSC had four (4) response alternatives: (1) Not sustainable (2) Challengeably Sustainable (3), satisfactorily sustainable (4) and strongly sustainable (See table 1 for interpretation). Respondents from each organisation therefore scored each indicator from 1 to 4 on the basis of their own reflections, experiences and judgement. The average score for each dimension of sustainability was calculated by aggregating all the responses. The final composite score which represents the overall state of sustainability is therefore an aggregation of all the four dimensions. This means, the final civil society sustainability index can be categorised as either 'not sustainable', 'Challengeably sustainable', 'satisfactorily' and 'very sustainable'.



Score	Key	Interpretation	Implication
1	Not Sustainable	Extremely difficult to achieve or maintain the indicator at present (and also in the next 5-10 years)	Civil Society (Organisations) are struggling or striving to achieve or maintain the indicator
2	Challengeably Sustainable	Quite difficult to achieve or maintain the indicator at present (and also in the next 5-10 years).	Civil Society (Organisations) are surviving with the achievement or sustenance of the indicator
3	Satisfactorily Sustainable	Easy or moderately difficult to achieve or maintain the indicator at present (and also in the next 5-10 years).	Civil Society (Organisations) are thriving and making significant progress with the achievement of the indicator
4	Very Sustainable	Not too difficult to achieve or maintain the indicator at present (and also in the next 5-10 years).	Civil Society (Organisations) are sustainable in relation to the indicator

Table 1: Interpretation of CSSI

Drawing on the ‘Directory of NGOs in Ghana’ (ISODEC, 2005) and an online directory of over 1100 CSOs maintained by WACSI (<http://civilsocietygh.org/wacsi-html/web/directory.php>), the self-assessment CSSC was sent to about 250 civil society organisations across all the 10 regions in Ghana—taking into consideration diversity of the sector within which they operate, the type of CSOs and the location/addresses. The online survey was also advertised on a number of networks and platforms including the Facebook page of WACSI and also through the International Non-governmental Organisations (INGO) forum. We also purposively included some beneficiaries of the STAR-Ghana supported sustainability initiatives in order to explore further views and perceptions about the state of sustainability. The computation for the scores of the various dimensions and criteria of sustainability were calculated and retrieved from the online survey site (<http://bit.ly/csossustainability>).

Researchers have drawn attention to the fact that respondents could feel embarrassed to reveal private details in self-assessment type of questionnaires or even exaggerate some responses (McDonald, 2008; Paulhus & Vazire, 2007). In view of this, we designed the survey instruments to be anonymous to enable respondents to be as honest as possible in sharing their views. Overall, there were 95 responses to the survey. While the response rate was generally low, it did not necessarily affect the messages and conclusions reached in this report as our attention was largely focused on the depth and spread of the responses rather than the quantity of respondents. The online survey was also complemented by informal discussions and telephone conversations with some CSOs to explore further anecdotes, practical experiences and further insights about the issues covered under the study. The online survey ran concurrently with the face-to-face conversations and the telephone discussions.

2.3 The Demography of Respondents

While the survey itself was anonymous, there were questions such as year of establishment, type of CSO and regions of active operations, which enabled us to identify the demography of the participants of the study. The respondents were very diverse and came from all the 10 regions, but not all districts in Ghana. Many described themselves as NGOs; others viewed themselves as CBOs; many others described themselves as Alliances. There were also coalitions, faith-based organisations, media advocacy organisations, youth networks and INGOs that participated in the study. Some of the respondents have been operating since about 1954 with others being formed as recent as 2010. The respondents operate in sectors as wide as health, education, environment, human rights, land, forestry, mining, gender rights, water and sanitation, climate change, food and agriculture, disaster control, capacity building and trainings and international trade. There were those who were operating in only one region whilst several of the respondents were operating in more than one region—with some operating in as many as four regions.

In the course of the research, a research team member also participated in an international webinar organised by the Oxford-based INTRAC on the theme: Building Sustainability of Civil Society. This webinar enabled the team to engage with, and also learn about the themes explored in this report, from international audiences. A follow up conversations was held with some individuals who made presentations during this webinar such as Felix Wood of Afrikids, one of the cases presented in this report.

2.4 Limitations, Challenges and Reflections about the Methodology

The first limitation and challenge of the research relates to the timing. This research started in December 2014, at a time when several CSOs were mopping up their activities for the year and also preparing for Christmas, retreats and work plans for the succeeding year. As it was a very busy year, several appointments were not honoured and some had to be cancelled at the last minute. This accounted for the low number of participants in the study.

Second, while the emphasis of the research was not necessarily on the quantitative representation of respondents, the response rate was generally low as just about one-third of the invitees responded to the survey. Perhaps, the timing contributed to this state of affairs. Again, the relatively low responses can also be attributed to the fact that the whole research was to be completed in one month, with just about two weeks dedicated for the data collection component. But as it has been emphasised, the telephone conversations and the spread of the responses enabled us to detect the patterns of the state of sustainability.

The final challenge of the study can be linked to its reliance on self-reported data.



Generally, the study did not follow up with some issues that had ordinarily required some verification. For example, it did not verify whether there are financial manuals as respondents reported, whether there are board meetings as reported, whether there has been shortfalls in funding flows as reported and even whether organisations still enjoy the support of their constituents as reported. The study was largely that of a self-reflection and perception-based. But this in itself is a strength as it gave access to phenomenological data, which are unobtainable in any other way other than the respondents from CSOs themselves (Kline, 1993; Paulhus and Vazire, 2007; McDonalds 2008). Again, the research suffer a weakness from the fact that, it would have been more desirable if the survey per organisation had been undertaken by a group rather than just one person (usually the head or a senior person) undertaking it. These limitations and challenges do not in any way negate the findings and conclusions reached in the report. Despite the short timing and the busy schedule, the three-member team that led the study were able to reach out to several respondents through verbal channels such as telephones and face-to-face communications.

03

**MUTABLE
MEANINGS OF
CIVIL SOCIETY
SUSTAINABILITY**



➡ 3.1 Civil Society Sustainability: What does it really mean?

What does sustainability in the context of CS actually mean? This is the central question that remains the focus of this section. This focus is important because the way that CS sustainability is conceptualized and understood shapes the range of investment and strategies employed by CS for their continual existence and operations. It was clear from the start of this research that there are different perspectives on sustainability and what it means in practice. For instance, Benton and Monroy (2004) have argued that sustainability is a generic concept defined more by the context of its application than by any settled meaning. This assertion brings to light the important role of context as far as getting the meaning of sustainability is concerned. To Benton and Monroy (2004), sustainability is about the ability of a given organisation to reduce its dependency and to improve its significance in the market while maintaining its social mission. In recent assessments of CS sustainability undertaken by bodies such as USAID and CIVICUS (CIVICUS, 2013; 2014; USAID, 2012; 2013), sustainability is conceptualised as a product of existence of particular conditions. The annual CSO Sustainability Index carried out by USAID for instance is based on assessment of (i) Legal environment; (ii) Organisational capacity; (iii) Financial viability; (iv) Advocacy capacity; (v) Service Provision; (vi) Infrastructure and (vii) Public image and reputation (See USAID, 2011; 2013; 2014). The CIVICUS reports also emphasise structure, operating environment, values and impact (Darkwa et al, 2006). In what follows, we present some perspectives and messages on how sustainability of civil society has been understood in the context of this research.

➡ 3.1.1 Civil Society Sustainability is a Process rather than an end

One important issue that came up during this study is about whether civil society sustainability should be considered a process or an outcome/goal. Here, the overall pattern of the responses shows that civil society sustainability is largely a process although it can equally be a goal in its own right. Truly, the attainment of a certain level or stage in the life span of organisations where they can have strong ability and capacity to maintain independence, to continually generate expected funds to pursue planned operations, to command strong recognition and legitimacy, to wield influential power in its mission and the sector in which it operates, and as one respondent puts it: 'to wean itself from living on a wing and prayer of (foreign) donor dependence' is an enviable and cherished dream for most of the organisations that took part in this study. Yet, the status of sustainability of an organisation can change at any particular point in time. Sustainability can therefore be seen more as a journey and process but not a destination as it allows an organisation to continue to perform its mission and make impacts. It is therefore a means to an end. The findings from the study thus suggests that civil society sustainability, while it is a cherished dream, is never a state of perfection but one that can be likened to a plant: it will grow well, flourish and thrive if watered, nurtured and cared for, but can wither quickly if it is not. How to be sustainable at any particular point in time should therefore engage decision-makers of organisations.

➡ 3.1.2 Civil Society Sustainability is more than Survivability

An important perspective shared by several respondents in the context of this study relates to the need to distinguish between survivability and sustainability. While both terms are closely related, they are quite distinct from one another. As its name implies, survivability defines an entity's ability to survive threats, challenges and even opportunities in the short term. In this case, a CSO is able to overcome some challenges and operate quite normally in line with its mission—but its longer term existence and continuation can be threatened. What the findings of the study suggest is that sustainability is a broader and holistic concept. It goes beyond just survival towards thriving, resilience, autonomy, independence and continuous functioning. One respondent gives a clearer description about the two terms as: “a civil society organisation may not necessarily be sustainable even if it has large amounts of funds for its annual programmes, and these funds are restricted to the extent that little is left to be invested into systems, structures and the development of the organisation. At best, such organisations are only surviving”.

➡ 3.1.3 Civil Society Sustainability is Holistic and Goes Beyond just Availability of Funds

In the course of the study, several respondents drew attention to the fact that there is excessive fixation and equation of sustainability to financial availability within the sector. This is understandable as, one respondent puts it: “everything boils down to finance”. Yet, the findings of the study debunked such fixation and brought out the fact that sustainability of CS does not necessarily mean availability of funds. It is far more elaborate and comprehensive than just finance. The study suggests that in view of its multi-dimensional nature, CS sustainability can better be understood by description rather than definition. This is because attempts at providing a single definition that captures the various dimensions and faces of sustainability may end up watering down the concept.

A synthesis of what sustainability entails in the context of CS in Ghana therefore shows that sustainability is about financial availability, viability and independence. It is about the continuous existence of organisations to operate in relation with their missions. It is also about sustainability in terms of the maintenance of the quality and benefits of particular interventions after funding has ended. Sustainability is also about the relevance of mission and the capacity of organisations to engage, raise funds and set up internal accountability and transparent systems. Sustainability is further understood as autonomy and also the capacity to remain resilient and healthy. It is important to understand sustainability by appreciating the nuances and the diversity of perspectives in any research efforts. It is also worthy to mention that these different perspectives complement each other rather than stand in isolation. In fact, these perspectives suggest the need to incorporate the often differing, but complementary views of sustainability in research and policy discourses on CSO sustainability. This study was therefore informed by the understanding that a sustainable CS is financially



sound, operationally functional, and institutionally healthy and has the capacity to continue to meet the needs of its key stakeholders while fulfilling its mission over time. Regardless of the specific context, sector or even type, sustainability stood out to be important for CS because it addresses how CSOs can continue to provide their invaluable services to their constituents, the nation and the world.

➡ 3.2 Exploring the State of Civil Society Sustainability: Dimensions, Criteria and Indicators

Although defining CS sustainability appeared to be a challenging enterprise, the various responses from the study gave a clue about how we might conceptualize and understand CS sustainability in contemporary Ghana. Throughout the study, the different understandings expressed converged around terms such as ‘continuity’, ‘long-lasting’, ‘permanence’, ‘enduring’, ‘durability’, ‘resilience’, ‘long term’ and ‘independence’. Whether it was non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations or faith-based organisations, many of these words were largely employed to reflect the understanding of sustainability. Equally, networks, international non-governmental organisations working with broad-based partners at the local (community) levels, professional associations and bodies that shared their understanding on sustainability used many of these key words.

In teasing out how sustainability of CS can be progressively assessed, this study followed a broad understanding which goes beyond funding dynamics to include the programmes or operations, the continuation of specific interventions as well as organisational and systems characteristics. In this sense, it is very similar to how others including USAID and CIVICUS have conceptualized sustainability of CS. Yet, it departs from these body of works in terms of the categorisations, the methodology for collating results and the general indicators that feed into the final determination of the state of sustainability. For instance, while the USAID Index rely predominantly on consensus from expert panel; the framework developed here considers a range of sources including expert interviews, informal interviews and self-assessment questionnaires directly from several bodies in the CS fraternity.

Drawing on the different understandings of sustainability, we developed a framework, known here as the wheel of sustainability, which was used to capture the views, perceptions, experiences and expressions about the state of civil society sustainability in Ghana (See fig 1). It is this wheel of sustainability that was used to quantitatively construct the CSSI discussed in chapter 4. Like any organism, several systems, organs, tissues and cells would have to work together to provide a healthy and sustainable organisation.

The wheel of sustainability argues that civil society sustainability can be understood by focusing on four dimensions, fifteen different criteria and a host of indicators. There are four dimensions identified by the study. These are financial (the continuous availability of financial resources), operational (capacity, technical resources and administrative

structures to operate programmes), identity (the long-term existence of organisations themselves) and in relation to interventions (the continuity of results, impacts of specific projects after its completion or funding ends). These dimensions only provide broad and key objectives that define sustainability of civil society. A number of criteria and specific indicators exist that help track the dimensions.



Figure1: The wheel of sustainability

The results from the study further identified 15 main criteria that matter most for understanding the four dimensions of CS sustainability: (i) income mobilisation and generation, (ii) financial planning, (iii) sound financial management systems, (iv) recognition and visibility, (v) operating space, (vi) institutional capacity and infrastructure, (vii) influential power, (viii) quality and continuity of service and programmes, (ix) relevance of mission, (x) governance and leadership, (xi) legitimacy and accountable systems, (xii) policy and regulatory environment, (xiii) ownership of projects, (xiv) partnership and (xv) results communications. These criteria were drawn from the responses to open ended questions such as “what does sustainability mean to you”, “what indicators would you use to measure progress towards sustainability” and also a prompt question of “civil society is sustainable when...”. Each of these criteria falls under one of the four dimensions discussed above. In essence, this study viewed CS sustainability in terms of soundness of financial position, the functionality of operations, the health of the institutions and capacity for CSOs to continue to meet the needs of its key stakeholders while fulfilling mission over time. A brief explanation of the four dimensions of civil society sustainability and the criteria in each case has been given in the sections below.

➡ 3.2.1 Financial Sustainability

A sustainable civil CS is financially vibrant. It has strong fund-raising capacity and often has a predictable inflow of funds from diverse sources. A sustainable CS has financial systems and also able to plan its financial health well. It has the autonomy and independence to say no to certain sources of funds. CS must be financially viable and healthy to continue to fulfil their mission over time to meet the needs, priorities and expectations of their constituents, particularly beneficiaries, supporters and donors. Financial sustainability is therefore crucial for the long-term survival, thriving and effectiveness of all types of CS including NGOs, CBOs, networks, coalitions, third-sector-focused training institutes and INGOs. In exploring the state of financial sustainability of CS, we focused on questions about an entity's ability to generate and also efficiently manage its finances so as to meet its spending commitments and operations both now and in the future. Consequently, the financial dimension of sustainability is composed of three main criteria: income mobilisation and generation, financial planning, sound financial management systems.

Key indicators and focus of questions asked in this dimension include: capacity to raise funds internally and externally, state of internal sources of generating funds, state of external sources of generating funds, the capacity to use IT for fund-raising, diversity of sources of funds, proportion of restricted funding against unrestricted funding, existence of a clear fund-raising plan, level of certainty of longer-term funds for operations, sound financial management systems in place including independent audits and annual reports. Responses to these questions enable one to get a nuanced picture of the financial sustainability of an organisation.

➡ 3.2.2. Operational Sustainability

A sustainable CS is operationally functional and robust. Operational sustainability looks at the state of sustainability of CS in relation to the capacity and investment into institutional infrastructure, resources, the operating space, visibility and influential power that enable CS to operate as an entity. A sustainable CSO is also able to design its own programmes and make strategic decisions about areas to impact and vice versa. A sustainable CSO should be able to efficiently provide services, programmes and interventions to make well-defined impacts and also meet the needs of its constituents. It should be visible, recognised and be able to maintain competent staff that will deliver programmes. Consequently, the operational dimension of sustainability has five (5) main criteria. These are recognition and visibility, operating space, institutional capacity and infrastructure, influential power and quality and continuity of programmes.

The indicators or questions considered under this dimension include the ability of organisations to maintain physical office, meet general office running cost in the next five to ten years and the ability to maintain well-trained human resources in the next five to twenty years. Others include positions on publicising or publishing

project materials to constituent members and beyond, sustenance of partnerships and networks for sharing information, public image, knowledge and trust and state of visibility and recognisability in the policy area specialised by donors, private agencies and government agencies. Other issues under this dimension include reflections on whether operations can continue without donor support; whether existing projects can achieve expected results by expected end-year; whether most project activities can be sustained after current funding ends, whether favourable policies exist that enhance revenue raising and commercial activities, whether more programmes can be implemented in the future and general reflections on investments into their institutional capacity.

➡ 3.2.3 Identity Sustainability

A sustainable CS should be resilient and adaptable. It should have a bright prospect for long-term existence. Identity sustainability is focused on the long-term existence of the entities that occupy the civil society space. In what ways do the policy and regulatory environment facilitate or hinder the operations of CS? How does CS think it will achieve impact in Ghana within such an environment? Are the missions and visions through which CS emerge still relevant in contemporary Ghana? In what ways are management and governance of CS structured? What are the legitimacy and accountability challenges CS faces? How easy or difficult it is for (new) CS to emerge and thrive? These are some of the main questions, which are the focus of the identity dimension of sustainability. There are four (4) criteria considered in this study: relevance of mission, governance and leadership, legitimacy and accountable systems, policy and regulatory environment that fall under the Identity Sustainability. The specific questions and indicators reviewed in this dimension include the clarity of defined mission and direction, relevance of mission in contemporary times, clearly defined and functional management structure, legitimacy and accountable systems, existence of updated strategic plan, favourable framework for ease of registration and regulation of CSOs and the degree to which laws and regulations regarding taxation, procurement, access to information and other issues benefit or deter CSOs in their operations.

➡ 3.2.4 Interventions Sustainability

Interventions sustainability is focused on the extent to which targeted beneficiaries or stakeholders can continue with the goals, activities, principles and desired outcomes of specific interventions that CS implements. It assesses the extent to which communities, government agencies, partners and others who benefit from specific interventions would continue the activities and maintain benefits after the project ends. The main criteria under this dimension are ownership of interventions, results communication and partnership (which is about the connection between the intervention, the implementers and the beneficiaries). It therefore focuses on questions such as how activities of interventions (in target areas) would be continued



after funding ends, how results about outcomes of interventions are communicated, disseminated and shared broadly with the public, funders, researchers and other stakeholders.

In a nutshell, the wheel of sustainability is designed to capture both general and sector-specific criteria and indicators that cover the financial, operational, identity and interventions dimension of sustainability. What this framework drives home is that being sustainable, as a CSO is not just about organisations having sufficient financial resources and having the ability to manage them. Sustainability goes beyond this feature. Being sustainable is also about being relevant in contemporary times; it is about having institutional capacity and the infrastructure to pursue a well-defined mission. It is about the capacity to build on reputation and to develop and maintain strong external and internal relationships. This is true not just for NGOs but also for CBOs, FBOs, coalitions, networks, faith-based organisations and all the different groups that gather under the canopy of civil society. Being sustainable is equally about continuity of operations, of results and impacts, of human resources, of influential power and of favourable operating space. Sustainability also invokes the sense of continuity of relationships, of support from constituents, of visibility and recognition and also of legitimacy. It is also about sustaining the quality of services provided, communication of results and generally being in a position to shift from surviving to thriving. Drawing on this framework, the next section presents findings on what emerged as the (perceived) status of civil society sustainability in Ghana in the context of the research.

04

THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY IN GHANA



➡ 4.1 Sustainability of Civil Society in Ghana: The Overall Picture

The analysis of the data obtained for this study leads to the conclusion that the state of civil society sustainability in Ghana remains challenging. This is reflected in the computation of the CSSI for this study which showed an overall composite score of 2.7 (See fig. 2). The score indicates that sustainability of civil society is quite far from satisfactory. The study further gives an indication that several civil society organisations are currently just surviving and struggling to thrive. This challenging state is not necessarily as a result of persecution from government as some reports suggest (e.g. PRIA et al, 2012; CIVICUS, 2013; 2014; USAID, 2012; 2013)). Rather, the challenging situation is a product of complex interactions and effects of financial availability, operations, identity and interventions on the civil society landscape in Ghana.

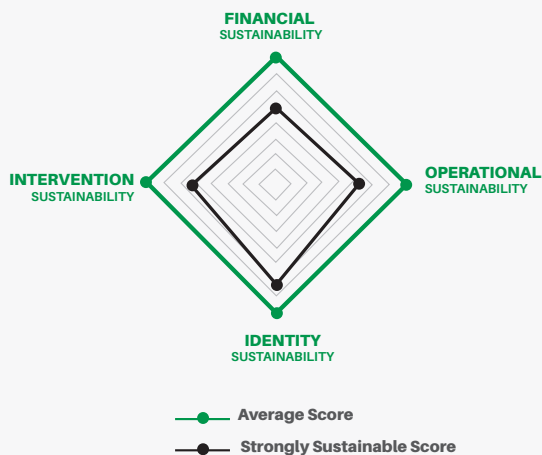


Figure 2 Spider Diagram of the State of Sustainability of CSOs

In terms of the four dimensions of sustainability that were the focus of this study, it is financial sustainability that showed the most pressing challenge for civil society in Ghana. Generally, financial sustainability is very challenging for many CSOs in Ghana (Score =2.4). In the area of operational sustainability, the overall picture point to a challenging and struggling-to-thrive situation (Score=2.6). Similarly, sustainability of results of interventions including programmes and projects remain less than satisfactory (Score=2.7). Interestingly, the results also suggest that in as much as CS faces a challenging situation, they will generally be far from 'extinct' as sustainability of identity of CS was generally satisfactory (Score=3.1). Though some organisations will struggle and even fold up, CS as a sector is still a vibrant and evolving space. In the sections that follow, we discuss some of the specificities of the state, challenges and opportunities as gathered during the study.

➡ 4.2 Financial Sustainability

Our analysis of the state of financial sustainability dimension focused on the ability of CS to generate and also manage finances so as to meet spending commitments and operations both now and in the future. Three main criteria were the focus of attention: income mobilisation and generation, financial planning, and sound financial management systems. Key indicators and questions asked in this dimension include: capacity to raise funds internally and externally, state of internal sources for generating funds, state of external sources for generating funds, the capacity to use IT for fund-raising, diversity of sources of funds, proportion of restricted funding against unrestricted funding, existence of a clear fund-raising plan, level of certainty of longer-term funds for operations and whether there are sound financial management systems in place including independent audits and annual reports.

The overall result about financial sustainability suggests that civil society in Ghana is under intense pressure to operate, survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive funding environment. This is reflected in the computation of the various responses on the state of financial sustainability of civil society, which yielded an average index of 2.4—a figure which falls short of the sustainable state envisaged by many of the respondents (See fig. 3).

However, there were variations in the scores obtained by the 3 different criteria under the financial sustainability dimension (See fig 3). Income mobilization and generation received a very challenging score (score=2.3), financial planning was even more challenging (score=2) while sound financial management systems received a satisfactorily score (score=3).

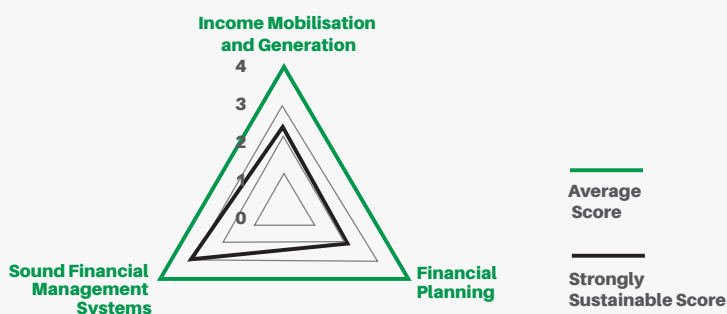


Figure 3: Financial sustainability

➡ 4.2.1 Income Generation and Mobilisation

Throughout the study, it came to light that income generation and mobilisation poses a very threatening situation for the sustainability of most CSOs, especially in the next five years to two decades. This is reflected in the score of 2.3 recorded on the CSSI.

Income generation and fundraising of CSOs in Ghana are generally limited to responding to calls for proposals and by appealing to donors. Other emerging but limitedly applied sources of funds include private sector philanthropy, partnership with international NGOs, grant making foundations, membership fees, and investments into social enterprises. Only few CSOs are able to sell products and services such as shea butter (for example NOGCAF) or consultancy (such as SEND-Ghana) to support their continued operations. Some respondents also made reference to their ability to generate non-competitive government funding to provide specified services in some localities.

The study also revealed that foreign grants and external sources of development assistance continue to be the main source of revenue for most CSOs although they are dwindling in recent times. Generally, the sources of funding are uncertain, precarious and very competitive. Many CSOs mentioned that they have not had stable budgets over the last few years. Further, although indigenous resource mobilisation and local fundraising efforts have been attempted by some organisations, their generation and overall contribution to organisations' annual budgets has been quite minimal in comparison to foreign grants. The few available funds come with stringent rules and in-flexibility. Additionally, they tend to be more focused on project tasks/activities rather than institutional building and investment in infrastructure that will enhance sustainability.

One of the commonly mentioned sources of funds for CSOs during the study was that of STAR-Ghana. This is a multi-donor funded pool mechanism that merges resources from the European Union, USAID, DANIDA and DFID (see section 8 for more discussion on this). Often the large urban-based CSO in the capital cities are better placed and have stronger capacity at raising funds from these sources compared to the smaller and up-and-coming CSOs. This is by virtue of the former's (national) visibility and greater organisational capacities. Networks, coalitions and alliances also appeared to be at an advantaged position to generate resources because of the diversity of their membership.

The study also showed that some of the more established and urban-based CSOs and networks had more diversified and varied sources of funding, although the nature and volume seem to be dwindling in recent times. Several of the smaller and often rural-based CSOs are striving or at best surviving on projectised funding (project-to-project basis). Their sources of funds are therefore not so varied and diversified. The study also emphasised the much-publicized view that, CS in Ghana rely significantly on external or foreign donor sources of funds for majority of their operations.

In spite of the availability of these sources of funds to CSOs, the responses gathered through the study showed that income generation, mobilisation and fundraising are very challenging at present. The changing dynamics of aid was identified as one of the major reasons. The result from the online survey regarding internal and external sources of funds further provides an example of how challenging the state of financial sustainability is for civil society in Ghana. Here, just about 5.4 percent of the respondents viewed their domestic sources of funds as very sustainable. About 23.2 per cent of respondents were of the view that their funds from domestic sources are not sustainable at all. A further 21.4 per cent saw their present state of internal resource mobilisation as satisfactorily sustainable. Crucially, about 50 percent of the respondents rated their present sources of internal mobilization of funds as challengeably sustainable. In the area of external sources of funds, 57 per cent of the respondents rated their present situations as challengeably sustainable while 12 per cent saw their present state as satisfactorily sustainable. About 25 per cent perceive their external sources of funds as not sustainable while just about 6 per cent viewed their external sources of funds as very sustainable (See fig. 4). One important message that permeated the study was that, while many CSOs are witnessing reductions in traditional donor funding and therefore seeking alternative sources, overcoming dependency on external (donor) sources remains a daunting challenge.

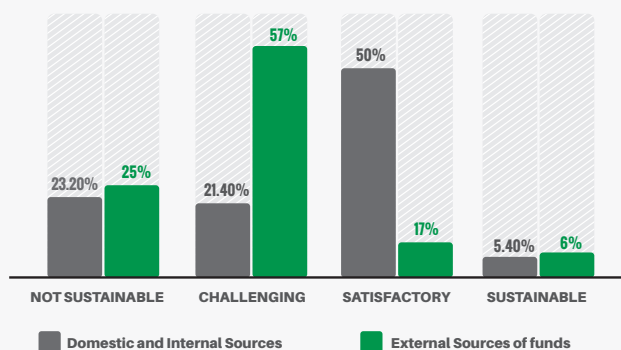


Figure 4: sustainability of sources of funds

The findings also suggest that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools, particularly the internet and social media platforms offer new opportunities for fund-raising for CSOs (See fig. 5). Yet, there is a general weak capacity on the part of CSOs in using same for fund-raising. For both the more established and larger organisations as well as the smaller ones, the limited sources of obtaining core funding to support programmes and operations is a huge challenge.



Figure 5: Confidence and sustainability of using ICT to raise funds

4.2.2 Financial Planning

While internal and domestic resource mobilisation is an important ingredient for sustainability, conscious planning, projections and strategic activities to achieve regular inflow of income is equally important. This study considered how different bodies are making projections about their current and future financial state as an important dimension of financial sustainability.

What emerged from the research is that, the environment for planning about finance is marked with uncertainty and anxiety. Indeed, the average score of 2 obtained for this sub-dimension portrays a picture of a very challenging situation for financial planning. But surprisingly, while there is general recognition of a shrinking funding space; the findings also suggest that long term planning for fund-raising and allocation is only now emerging in most CSOs. It was surprising because one may expect that the current challenging and competitive funding environment would ignite conscious planning about future sources of funds and their allocations across a broad spectrum of expenditure items. At present, long-term financial planning appears not to have been tackled seriously among CSOs—even though there is strong recognition of the challenging state of fundraising. Relatedly, we further found that although several organisations indicated that they have a fundraising plan in the short to medium term, these are usually not in written forms. Of course, some have attempted to map out a number of sources and actions to pursue in order to attract more funds but the general environment for planning also looks challenging.

Encouragingly, the study showed that civil society has considerable skills-mix for writing competitive proposals which can generate financial resources. But there is a broader challenge for the leadership of several civil society organisations to maintain the present capacity and mix of skills for funds generation. This is reflected through the

responses relating to questions about the state of sustainability in maintaining their capacity to adequately raise funds for their operations. As shown in fig. 6, only 7.0 per cent were confident of a very sustainable capacity. Some 49.1 per cent were of the view that sustaining capacity to raise funds is very challenging at present while 38.6 percent shared the view that their capacity to raise funds in the present circumstances is satisfactory. Indeed, about 5.3 per cent were of the view that it is not sustainable at all to maintain present capacity to raise funds.

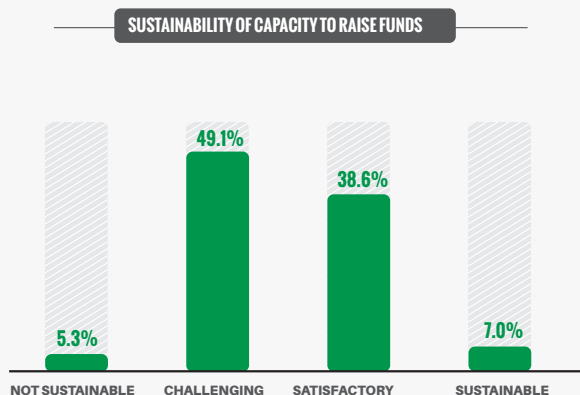


Figure 6: Sustaining capacity to raise funds

➡ 4.2.3 Sound Financial Management Systems

Over the years, several civil society organisations have managed to put in place financial management systems including independent audits, annual reports and a host of systems, although a number of NGOs still struggle with maintaining such systems and processes. Others also mentioned the existence of financial tools such as manuals and procurement guidelines.

Sound financial management systems had a score of 3 on the CSSI. This implies a satisfactorily sustainable situation. This implies that several CSOs are making progressive progress with the institution of financial systems, even if they are weak. The online survey corroborated this finding. About 43 per cent of the respondents indicated they have sound and sustainable financial systems in place (See fig. 7), followed by 40 per cent of the respondents who rated existence of sound financial management systems as satisfactory. Only about three per cent perceived their systems as unsustainable while about twelve per cent were of the view that keeping financial systems appeared challenging for them.

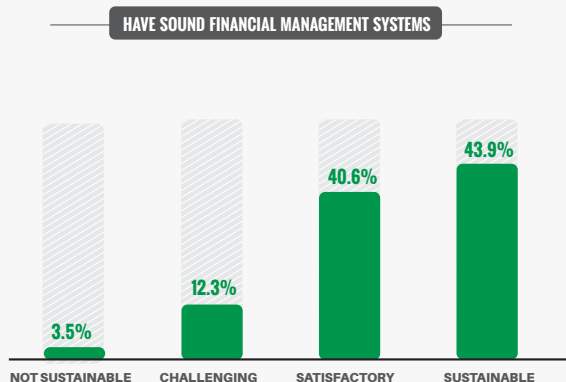


Figure 7: Sustaining sound financial management systems

The qualitative interviews suggested that while the overall response was satisfactory, it was actually the large national, transnational and international CSOs who usually have sound financial management systems. Of course several CSOs at the countryside also keep some forms of systems but they generally lack internal financial control systems that facilitate transparency and accountability. Others were also of the view that updating many of the financial systems such as audit reports is irregular and driven by the need to meet donor requirements rather than for institutionalisation purposes.

To sum up, the study brought to light a myriad of challenges and experiences that depict the state of financial sustainability of civil society in Ghana. Fund-raising and resource mobilisation is a very challenging exercise for many CSOs. There is a general lack of core funding, and more importantly unrestricted forms of funding which give some flexibility into the ways financial resources can be invested into institutional capacity building. Civil Society also face a situation of anxiety, angst and uncertainty in decision-making, planning and execution of their programmes. In essence, the financial sustainability situation of CSOs in Ghana is very challenging. Income mobilisation and generation are challenging. Financial planning and projections are equally challenging even though a satisfactory response was garnered for the existence of sound financial management systems.

➡ 4.3 Operational Sustainability

The programmes and operations undertaken by CSOs, whether in education, health, water and sanitation, in urban areas and rural areas form an intrinsic component of the sustainability features of civil society organisations. There were five main criteria which guided the discussions on operational sustainability. These are recognition and visibility, operating space, institutional capacity and infrastructure, influential power and quality and continuity of programmes. The specific indicators or questions

asked under this dimension include the ability of organisations to maintain physical offices, meet general office running cost in the next five to ten years and the ability to maintain well-trained human resources in the next five to twenty years. Others include positions on publicising and publishing project materials to constituent members and beyond, sustenance of partnerships and networks for sharing information, public image, knowledge and trust and state of visibility and recognisability in the policy area specialised by donors, private agencies and government agencies. Other issues considered under this dimension include reflections on whether operations can continue without 'donor' support; whether existing projects can achieve expected results by expected end-year; whether most projects activities can be sustained after current funding ends, whether favourable policies exist that enhance revenue raising and commercial activities, whether more programmes can be implemented in the future as well as issues about investments into their institutional capacity.

The computation of the state of operational sustainability, using combined figures of the five criteria for the CSSI, showed an average index of 2.6, which depicts a challenging and less-than satisfactory state for CS to continue their operations (See fig. 8). The most basic conclusion that can be reached here is that, in addition to the competitive funding environment, it is also equally challenging for several CSOs to continue to execute their programmes in the changing development landscape. This results partly from the fact that institutional capacity and infrastructure to sustain programmes in the middle to long-term looks challenging for several CSOs that participated in the study (score=2.3). Maintaining quality and continuity of programmes and projects in the changing development landscape also received a challenging score (score=2.3). Again, the general recognition and visibility of programmes of several entities was rated less than satisfactory (score=2.6) although the influential power of civil society was rated satisfactory (score=3). In terms of the operating space for programmes and projects to continue, the findings suggest a near-satisfactory score (score=2.8).

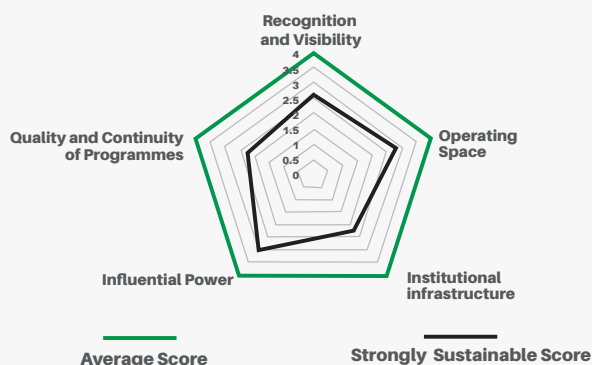


Figure 8: Operational Sustainability



Institutional Capacity and Infrastructure: Some practitioners (e.g. Vandyck, 2014) have long emphasised the importance of capacity building in discussions about sustainability of CSOs. A sustainable CSO is therefore one, which is not just surviving but is healthy and has the capacity to remain resilient to pursue its programmes in the face of the changing development landscape. Respondents were therefore asked questions about their state of sustainability as far as capacity building and general investment into the infrastructure that support longer term existence of organisations, including maintaining (permanent) well-trained staff in the next five to ten years and general office running cost are concerned.

The average score received for the institutional capacity on the CSSI is 2.3. The main implication for this score is that CSOs face a very challenging situation in building and maintaining capacity and investments that put them in a very resilient and healthy position in the face of the changing development climate. The qualitative interviews brought to fore the fact that several CSOs are focusing largely on how to simply maintain their programmes and activities rather than how to strengthen their capacity, operations and longer term existence. This is also true for many of the respondents from geographical areas outside regional and district capitals in Ghana. Additionally, there is general dearth of the organisational, technical and financial capacity for many CSOs to live, expand and thrive without donor funding. CSOs also find themselves in an almost perpetual cycle of needing capacity building due to high staff turnover in the sector.

A number of respondents also highlighted the point that CSOs generally attempt to employ permanent staff and also contract other full or part-time staff on some specific projects but several of them lack the resources to maintain paid staff or provide personnel with minimal benefits, such as paid sick leave or holidays and contributions towards their pensions. Few CSOs have also institutionalised human resources practices such as contracts, job descriptions, pay scales or personnel policies. CSOs have difficulty maintaining well-qualified staff partly because of insufficient and unreliable funding and partly because of a low volunteering culture in the country. In the interviews, some organisations brought to light the increasingly growing practice where relatives, often without requisite skills and qualifications were employed in order to keep business going.

Recognition and Visibility: How quickly CS is recognised by stakeholders in particular sectors or policy area is an important element for sustaining operations in the longer term. Recognition, visibility and the image created by CSOs through their activities are important criteria for operational sustainability. These are very important in facilitating the sustenance and continuity of programmes, interventions and works of civil society organisations. This is underscored by a comment from one respondent who said: "When it comes to particular sectors or policy area, some names naturally come to mind. Truly, there is a broader issue of sustainability for many civil society organisations but for us, our hands are full now; we keep getting projects from key donors such as the EU, DFID and even some ministries. Part of the reason is that we

are visible and have also gathered expertise in those policy areas over the years. The truth is, it is the name and track record of some organisations that are keeping them at the moment". This comment draws attention to the importance of branding, visibility and communicating positive results or impact made by civil society.

Respondents to the study were asked to rate the state of their sustainability in relation to how quickly or easily they were recognized by other stakeholders. The indicators and questions in this domain covered issues such as the state at which respondents can meet the cost of maintaining physical office in the next five to ten years, the ability of respondents to publicize and publish projects materials to constituent members and also those outside their constituency as well as the extent of growing public knowledge of and trust in the various organisations that participated in the study.

What emerged from the assessment is that, recognition and visibility of CSOs mildly fall short of satisfactory as far as operational sustainability was concerned (Score =2.6). Throughout the interviews and the discussions that accompanied the survey, there was the general observation that CSOs often receive good media coverage at both local and national levels, particularly in view of the emergence of private media outlets including FM radio stations, newspapers and online media. Yet, such visibility opportunities are often limited to few audiences as it is often costly to attract wider-reaching media outlets. CSOs are also increasingly using social media to address their target audience and constituents, although the fund-raising potentials of this channel have not been fully explored yet. Again, some variations in terms of visibility were detected among those respondents who also operate at sub-national levels and those that operate at national levels who often receive invitations to comment on national issues on wider-reaching media outlets.

Some CSOs have become very skilled at using the media to effectively communicate some of their programmes, project specific goals and mission to the public. It was also gathered through the study that CSOs generally pay much attention to visibility and so promote themselves in order to attract and retain funding from diverse sources. This often brings excessive competition and tension within the sector. Regular publications in the form of brochures, newsletters, newspaper articles, magazines, posters and billboards are some of the main channels through which CSOs generally make their work and programmes known to a broader audience to facilitate visibility and awareness about their mission, agenda, background and programmes. Many CSOs generally recognize the value and importance of publications such as annual reports to enhance their visibility but the production is often ad hoc and irregular for many of the smaller CSOs. Finance is fingered as one of the main challenge for the lack of continued and regular production of these reports.

One of the challenging areas for maintaining visibility and recognition identified in the course of the study relates to the difficulty of most CS respondents to maintain physical office and/or address. For instance, the online survey suggested that, only 6.9 per cent perceive their state of maintaining physical office and/or address as

very sustainable (See fig. 9). This looks quite depressing. As many as 44.8 per cent see the cost of maintaining physical office very challenging in the present changing development landscape. About 15.5 per cent indicated that their ability to meet the cost of physical office is not sustainable at present. There are about 32.8 per cent of the participants who however rated this indicator as satisfactory.

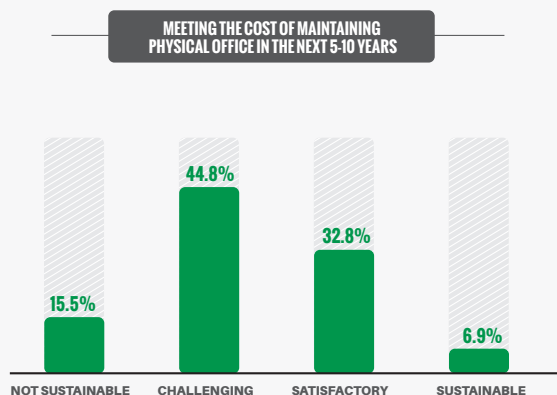


Figure 9. Sustaining the cost of maintaining physical office

Quality and continuity of service: The value created by unique programmes of CSOs can be an effective fertiliser, to borrow the words of Charles Vandyck (2014), towards sustainability. A sustainable CSO is one that maximises the value that its programmes add to structures and conditions that improve lives in societies. Respondents were asked to rate how the quality of the impacts of existing programmes can be continued in the changing development landscape. The emphasis on quality was meant to bring to the fore the added value and vacuum which CSOs and the impacts of their interventions fill. This received an average score of 2.3 on the CSSI which reflect a growing challenge and concern for CS to keep the quality of programmes in the changing development landscape (See fig 8). Indeed, the survey responses revealed that just 1.9 per cent of the respondents were confident to rate the sustenance of quality of programmes after current funding cycle ends as 'very sustainable' (See fig 10). For this group, project activities and impact can be sustained after its current funding ends. However, about 53.9 per cent considered this as 'challengeably sustainable' whilst some 34.6 per cent viewed continuation of quality of programmes as 'satisfactorily sustainable'. Approximately one-tenth (9.6 per cent) felt it will be 'not sustainable' to maintain the quality of existing programmes, given the current dynamics of the development landscape.

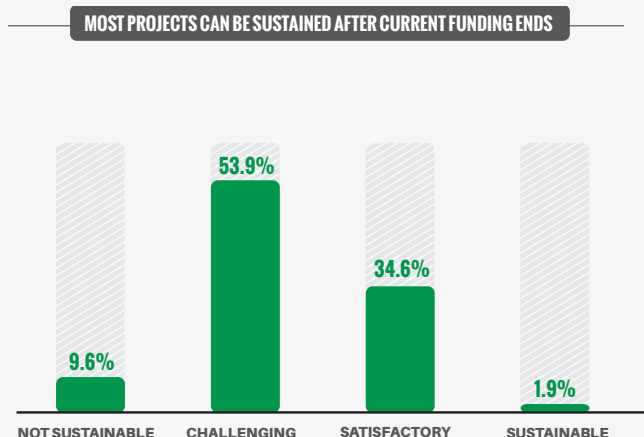


Figure 10: Continuity and sustenance of quality of programmes after current funding ends

Once again, the findings and the foregoing discussion suggest that civil society is largely surviving, but not thriving, as far as operations are concerned. The overall score of 2.6 for operational sustainability is an indication that CSOs face a monstrous challenge within the current development landscape to sustain, continue and expand their efforts on service delivery, advocacy and facilitation or brokerage functions in an environment where funding seem to be not just dwindling but also drying up. To many of the respondents of this study, these trends have serious implications on the identity, roles, functions and even their relationships with government and the poor men and women who are purportedly at the centre of their operations. Several respondents revealed in the course of the study that, it is and will be more difficult for them to meet the cost of maintaining and running a physical office in the next five to ten years; it will be more challenging and difficult to meet emoluments of employees; it will be more challenging to maintain competent and well-trained staff; it will be a mountainous challenge to expand programmes into new locations or operational areas and to build new constituents. Just like the challenging financial situation, several respondents expressed uncertainty and anxiety about the future and continuity of their (existing) programmes. This anxiety is further compounded by the expectations of Ghana becoming an aid-free country by 2020, which has occasioned a massive withdrawal of donor support for civil society operations. Yet, there is some innate hope among several respondents that their organisations will be far from extinct in spite of the current challenging situation. There is a strong hope that civil society will successfully overcome the ‘turbulence’ being manifested by the current changing development landscape. As one respondent aptly puts it: we have been in existence for almost 50 years and if we survived up until this time, then we will surely cross this one too.

4.4 Identity Sustainability

A sustainable civil society is resilient, adaptable and has a bright prospect for longer-term existence to achieve its mission. For identity sustainability, the study focused on the long-term existence of the entities that occupy the civil society space. There were four main criteria that were important in constructing identity dimension of sustainability: relevance of mission, governance and leadership, legitimacy and accountable systems and policy and regulatory environment. Here, the specific questions and indicators focused on clarity of defined mission and direction, relevance of mission in contemporary times, clearly defined and functional management structure, legitimacy and accountable systems, existence of updated strategic plan, favourable framework for ease of registration and regulation of CSOs and the degree to which laws and regulations regarding taxation, procurement, access to information and other issues benefit or deter CSOs in their operations.

The computation of the state of sustainability in relation to identity of civil society showed an average score of 3.1. This is encouraging as it suggests that in spite of the challenging nature of fund-raising (see financial sustainability) and operations, civil society as a sector would continue to exist and thrive to contribute towards socio-economic development in Ghana. Of course different organisations will experience the impacts of the changing development landscape differently with some struggling to strive, while others are surviving. Others exhibit strong potential to thrive and remain highly sustainable in the changing development landscape. There were however variations in the scores obtained with the four different criteria considered under the identity domain (See fig 11). Relevance of mission was rated as very sustainable (score=4), Governance and leadership was rated as satisfactory (score=3) while policy and regulatory environment achieved a satisfactory score (score=3). Legitimacy and accountable systems received quite a satisfactory score (score=2.5).

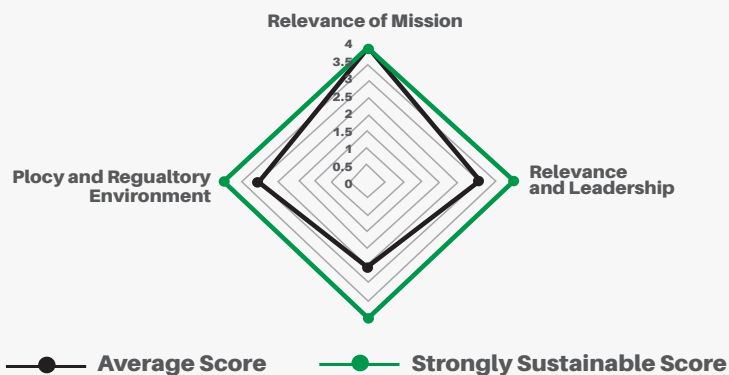


Figure 11: State of Identity Sustainability

Relevance of Mission

All CSOs have mission statements. Mission and values remain the very character of an organisation or any body, CSOs inclusive. They set out the purpose and the core functions of the organisation. But how relevant these missions are in contemporary Ghana is a matter which is important in understanding the state of sustainability. This is because missions should be demand-driven and deliver programmes and services that stakeholders and constituents need, want and value. Respondents were asked to assess the state of relevance of their missions—the very purpose for which they were set up in contemporary Ghana and what it means for the continuity of operations in the next one to two decades. This produced a score of 4. This implies that the overall pattern of the responses showed that several CSOs believe they have a clear mission, mandate and well-defined vision—which are still relevant currently. It must be mentioned that whether this mission is internalised and shared broadly with employees, constituents and other stakeholders, goes beyond the scope of this paper.

The interviews and discussions however suggested that the changing development landscape, particularly with the dwindling funds have set in motion a situation best described as the ‘survival of the fittest’: where the few available financial resources are likely to be concentrated in and on specific thematic areas and sectors. As one key informant remarked: “We are in a situation where the organisations have to move along with where the money is or die out”. A further finding from the study is that, driven largely by the funding chase, several CSOs are twisting their missions and goals to suit funding requirements; forming or becoming part of networks they share very little values with and occasionally revising strategic plans to suit areas where there seem to be a funding opportunity. As one respondent hints: “the survival of NGOs is becoming more important to us than doing development”. These mission-twisting practices are interpreted to mean a tactic for survival but it can also mean a loss of focus for many CSOs. This is because in the long-term, these organisations become ‘jack of all trades and master of none’. As one respondent observed: “many CSOs lack focus; today they are in reproductive health; another time they are into something else, say oil and gas. Wherever the money goes that is where they go. I think any donor looking at the trend of your operation will not invest in your organisation”. Such tendency for mission-twisting exercises can affect the legitimacy, credibility and the identity of these CSOs which can further affect their functions and how they are perceived by those they engage and the poor they purport to represent. It also makes it difficult for them to build expertise in specific sectors.

The qualitative interviews also revealed an important tension CSOs face in light of the changing development landscape and particularly the changing funding dynamics. This relates to whether CSOs should remain steadfast in maintaining their values and mission or to just strive to survive by following where there is ‘flood of funding’. This tension is explained better by one respondent:



“We are primarily a training-based institute with a clear mandate on capacity building. But we face an important dilemma when we keep getting funding opportunities to do things such as climate change, which is clearly not our mandate. There is a clear dilemma as to whether we should follow this trend so as to just survive or reject it and keep pursuing our original mandate”.

Invariably, some CSOs may be unclear about their mission, and even face a strong challenge to stick to it. But the perception of absolute relevance of mission is indeed encouraging.

Governance and Leadership

The responses gathered from the study showed a very satisfactorily sustainable situation (score of 3) of the governance and leadership sub-dimension of sustainability. What emerges from the study is that most entities have well defined management structures including Board of Directors that meet occasionally to make major decisions about their organisational activities. However, the qualitative interviews highlighted the fact that more often than not it is often the ‘big’ CSOs headquartered in Accra and the major cities which are successful in having a clear separation of management from an active Board of Directors. One of the consistent chorus that emerged from the qualitative interviews was that there are several organisations, both the sub-national and national-focused CSOs, where the separation of the functions of Board of Directors and management exist mostly on paper, but not in practice. Again the ‘quality’ of such members in terms of providing a clear direction and strategic decisions that can positively influence sustainability are usually suspect in many cases. As one senior key informant observed: “I can tell you for a fact that most of the Board of Directors you hear of are actually Board of Cronies and Friends”.

Relatedly, it also came to light through the study that, a number of organisations are ran as “one-man shows,” that is they rely largely on a single person for all functions related to management and continued operations. Succession plan is also lacking for many CSOs.

Legitimacy and Accountable Systems

Legitimacy is an essential ingredient for sustainability of civil society. It provides the springboard for access to many assets that contribute to sustainability of CSOs. Generally, legitimacy is understood as “the right to be and do something in society—a sense that an organisation is lawful, admissible, and justified in its chosen course of action” (Edwards, 2014:7). It is about the perceptions held by key stakeholders in relation to whether the existence, activities and impact of CSOs are justifiable and appropriate. CSOs, and civil society broadly, are well known for their penchant for advancing the course of poor and marginalised groups and mobilising people and resources through commitments to social values and missions that enhance the public good (Brown and Jagadananda, 2007; Mutua 1997:12) suggested that

civil society should secure domestic, ideological, financial and moral support from interested constituencies. However, reaching out to secure such variants of support requires frantic effort to build, earn and sustain legitimacy by identifying constituency needs and developing interventions that address these needs directly (Badejogbin, 2014). Our findings show that the average score received on legitimacy was 2.5, which mildly fell short of satisfactory.

Legitimacy, whether legal, pragmatic or normative, is typically grounded in the perceptions of the different stakeholders in the broader socio-economic and geographical context in which the organisation is situated. These perceptions by key stakeholders about the existence, activities and impacts of CSOs and whether their actions are justifiable and appropriate remains key for credibility and sustainability of CSOs. As most civil society organisations make direct or indirect claims about their mandate of providing benefits to society or specific groups, public recognition of their value is very important in discussions about sustainability. Equally, accountable systems, which lay down responsibilities for answering performance expectations to specific stakeholders, are essential in advancing towards sustainability.

Policy Regulatory Space

A number of studies including CIVICUS reports have drawn attention to the fact that the operating space for civil society is generally shrinking in several countries. What is the situation in Ghana and how does that contribute to sustaining the identity of CSOs? The quantification of the responses on policy and regulatory environment achieved a satisfactory score (score=3). What the responses reveal is that the liberal political environment in the country allows CSOs to operate quite easily. Generally, CSOs in Ghana are not subjected to much systemic and targeted harassment or witch-hunting by state apparatus. Yet, there is an emerging threat, though quite embryonic, which has the potential to constrict the space through which CSOs operate. Many respondents mentioned that, CSOs get increasingly labelled as either doing the bidding of the ruling government or the opposing parties. This perception often affects delivery and advocacy efforts. Eventually, CSOs who do not want to be part of the politics of the government or the opposition generally shy away from doing effective advocacy. Deeply concerned about this situation, one respondent remarked:

“It is worrying that CS has been divided by politics. This makes the differentiation between human development issues and political issues difficult to make. A clear case in point is the politicization of Ghana’s educational system. There is hope for CSOs in Ghana but more and more we can depoliticize CS notwithstanding our political biases. CS needs to be more objective and look at certain things more holistically with the bigger picture.

Another CSO notes: “for CSOs to be relevant, their work must be de-politicised”.

➡ 4.5 Interventions Sustainability

Interventions sustainability is focused on the extent to which targeted beneficiaries or stakeholders can continue with the goals, activities, principles and desired outcomes of specific interventions implemented by CS. It assesses the state to which communities, government agencies and partners who benefit from specific interventions would continue the activities and benefits after the project ends. The main criteria under this dimension are ownership of interventions, results communication and partnership (which is about the connection between the intervention, the implementers and the beneficiaries). It therefore focuses on questions such as how activities of interventions (in target areas) would be continued after funding ends, how results about outcomes of interventions are communicated, disseminated and shared broadly with the public, funders, researchers and other stakeholders.

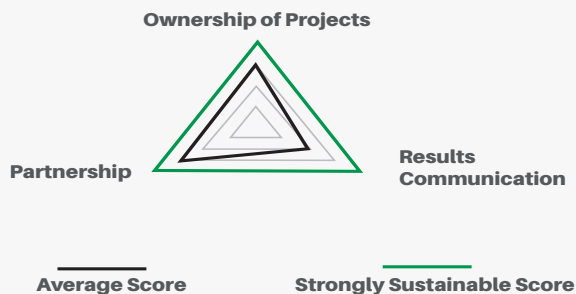


Figure 12: Status of sustainability of interventions

The overall score of 2.7 on the CSSI for identity sustainability is an indication that CSOs are generally in a state where the likelihood of beneficiaries continuing interventions look less than satisfactory (See fig. 12). While the overall responses in the areas of partnership (score=3) and ownership of projects (score=3) remain satisfactory, that of the communication of results of interventions were rated challengeably sustainable (score=2).

Concluding Remarks: Getting the nuances of ‘Strivors’, ‘Survivors’, ‘Thrivers’ and ‘sustainable’ organisations

The foregoing discussion has shown that the general state of CS sustainability is that of a challenging and struggling-to-thrive situation. Financial sustainability is very challenging for many CSOs in Ghana. Operational sustainability also remains challenging. Sustainability of results of interventions also remains less than satisfactory. But as the identity sustainability showed, while some organisations will struggle and even fold up, civil society as a sector will continue to be a vibrant and evolving space. It will be far from being crowded given the challenging state and the changing development landscape.

A further look at the data and responses obtained in the course of the study reveals that four categories of civil society organisations can be distinguished in the light of the changing development landscape. These are 'Strivors', 'Survivors', 'Thrivors' and 'sustainable' organisations. 'Strivors' are those that had most of their responses clustered around 'not sustainable'. This group of organisations are facing extreme difficulty to generate and mobilise revenues; they are unable or struggle to keep sound financial management systems; struggling for recognition and visibility and struggling to continue with the implementation of programmes. They are also significantly challenged by weak operating space, weak institutional capacity and infrastructure and further struggling to sustain their legitimacy and accountability profiles. These organisations are likely to have threatened mission, weak governance and leadership structure and experience difficulty in communicating results of programmes as well as building and maintenance of partnerships with other stakeholders. In the light of these features, these organisations have a high risk of becoming existing but dysfunctional organisations and may even fold up.

The 'survivors' refer to the respondents that had most of their responses clustered around 'challengeably sustainable'. Although these organisations may have programmes running normally they are quite challenged in many ways in generating and mobilising revenues from diverse sources especially in the long term; They may be relying significantly on restricted sources of income. They recognise and may have attempted to keep sound financial management systems but such systems may not be strictly followed; they may be visible and recognised by other stakeholders. They may have a good capacity in their sector but face significant institutional deficits in terms of human resources, assets and equipment. This makes investment into institutional structures and capacity quite erratic. Some may have good legitimacy and accountability profiles which have to be improved. Governance and leadership of such organisations may be well constituted although a number of areas may need to be improved. The financial soundness and functionality of their operations are significantly dependent on the pace of donor sources. Survivors are not necessarily struggling for recognition and visibility but continuity and quality of programmes stand to be affected in the long term as this depends on a host of external factors such as funding. This means that several of the survivors are likely to survive on project-by-project basis.

The 'thrivors' refer to those respondents that had most of their responses clustered around 'satisfactorily sustainable'. They may have a balanced mix of internally and externally generated funds, restricted and unrestricted and short-term and long-term. They may have sound financial management systems that are strictly followed including annual audits and annual reports. They may have a very good capacity in their sector with significant improvement and availability of human resources, assets, equipment and tools. It may not be excessively difficult for thrivors to sustain quality and continuity of service and programmes. They may command a credible legitimacy even though accountability profiles might still need improvement. Governance and leadership of such organisations may be well constituted with operations governed by



clear separation between Board of Directors and management. They may have a strong influential power in their sector and sphere of operations; make significant efforts for projects to be owned by its beneficiaries and a timely and relevant mission.

The 'sustainable' refers to those respondents that had most of their responses clustered around 'very sustainable'. They are financially sound, operationally functional, and institutionally robust and have brighter prospects to significantly generate their own sources of income to complement other donor and external income. The sustainable scored 'very sustainable' on the indicators used on income mobilisation and generation, financial planning, sound financial management systems, recognition and visibility, operating space, institutional capacity and infrastructure, influential power, quality and continuity of service and programmes, relevance of mission, governance and leadership, legitimacy and accountable systems, policy and regulatory environment, ownership of projects, partnership and results communications.

With the overall score of sustainability falling short of satisfactory, the implication here is that many CSOs in Ghana may come under the survivor category. As sustainability gains traction, these nuances should not be lost in the debates. More importantly, CS in Ghana should begin to consider ways of moving from surviving stage towards thriving and sustainable. The next section presents some of the specific challenges where attention should be devoted to in building thriving and sustainable CSOs in Ghana.



05

CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY



➡ 5. CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY

The previous discussion has highlighted that, the challenges facing the sustainability of CSOs in Ghana in the context of the present development landscape are mainly related to financial sustainability and institutional capacity, structures and systems to execute programmes. But a number of challenges that require attention in order for CSOs to be sustainable and thrive in the changing development landscape were also flagged throughout the study. This section outlines some of the main challenges that threaten sustainability of civil society in Ghana, in the light of the foregoing discussion.

➡ 5.1. Over-Reliance on Donors and Changing Aid Dynamics

Several research, commentaries and experience from practice have shown that sustainable CSOs should have diversified funding sources and not be overly dependent on donors. But as the foregoing research has shown, civil society in Ghana largely depends on donor assistance for their operations. Funding from government, private sector and even internally generated sources form just a small proportion of the overall funding portfolio of CS in Ghana. The over reliance on (single) donors and external foreign assistance makes sustainability shaky. A related challenge is the lack of diversification of financial resources in general, particularly from the CSOs outside the regional capitals. This puts civil society sustainability at a serious risk.

➡ 5.2. Limited Utilisation of ICTs Potentials

The power of ICT, and particularly social media is transforming the way in which several CSOs operate in Ghana, and also elsewhere. While several CSOs have started to experiment with social media applications (e.g. Facebook, twitter and blogs), the overall uptake is still limited and in most cases not part of a broader strategic approach. Intriguingly, many of the capacity building and fund-raising opportunities offered by the internet have not received much attention in the discourse of CSO sustainability in Ghana. With the changing face of the sector as far as technology is concerned, CSOs that fail to utilise the full potentials offered by ICT stand a high risk of not being sustainable. This is particularly true when one considers the fact that traditional NGO activities such as fundraising and advocacy will directly benefit from the availability of a wide range of affordable online services and applications.

➡ 5.3. Limited Communication about Impacts and Results of Projects

This study has highlighted the fact that visibility, communication of results and impacts of projects to a wider audience play an important role in the sustainability of CSOs. Yet there was a common trend in the study that several organisations, not only those outside the regional capitals but also the larger organisations, do not pay

much attention and emphasis on this practice. Organisations whose work remain in obscurity are likely to struggle towards sustainability. Investment in visibility should be a priority.

➡ 5.4. Low Investment in Transparent and Accountable Systems

Transparency and accountability have received increased attention from many quarters in the governance of civil societies. They are now cherished criteria that are increasingly demanded in any fund-raising efforts, be it domestic or external, foreign or local. Yet, as the study shows, several CSOs, both the larger and the smaller ones rated their accountability systems as less satisfactory. A number of CSOs have improper administrative and fiscal systems; others are accountable only to donors but not constituents.

From the interviews, it came up that several organisations lack the basic systems and structures that make them credible and trustworthy. Some CSOs have no governance structures. If they do, most of them are weak and ineffective or exist only on paper. The absence or ineffectiveness of Board of Directors and management denies some CSOs the opportunity to benefit from strategic guidance and direction and accountability systems. Others talked about the non-existent, unclear and incoherent strategy (plan) as a limitation to win funding and pursue operation. One other overarching issue in this direction is limited ability and tendency to develop strategic plans, either internally or via external assistance. In some cases even where a strategic plan exists, it is rarely or never referenced. According to some CSOs, particularly those operating at a more local scale than national, investing in these systems often on an annual basis is costly. However, as they remain fundamental to the credibility of organisations, they admit that such weak structures and systems can challenge their existence and survival. The risk and the threat is that CSOs that do not have the expected systems and structures that qualify them to meet transparency and accountability criteria are likely to struggle to generate and mobilise financial and technical resources for their operations.

➡ 5.5. The Challenge of Maintaining Competent Human Resource

The third sector in Ghana is now very professionalised. Meeting competitive wage requirement is a herculean task for most of the CSOs that took part in this study. Due to the dwindling financial resources, some CSOs reported that they are unable to pay competitive emolument to recruit and maintain qualified staff in order to enhance the effective implementation of their projects. Some CSOs can only afford the services of volunteers whose quality and availability is not assured. One CSO laments: “partners are not ready to pay realistic wages for our staff so we have to find other alternative means”.



There is also an emerging trend where very vocal or senior activists who have played important roles in the sector are now being co-opted into government, which to some offer a worrying trend that may weaken the sector and its sustainability in the future. Competent human resources are indeed invaluable in the future sustainability of CS.

🕒 5.6. Perceived Corruption and Lack of Trust

Linked to the limited investment into accountable systems is perceived corruption in the third sector. According to CSOs, governments and other duty bearers are corrupt; CSOs have sought to hold them accountable by contributing to whistle-blowing and the promulgation of anti-corruption policies, laws and the establishment of institutions. This, the CSOs said was their contribution to Ghana's democratic development. Yet, the research brought to light how the sustainability of many civil society organisations remains threatened due to lack of accountability, transparency and perceived corruption. In our interviews it came up strongly that some CSOs are equally corrupt and are not ready to open up for any accountability check for their stewardship. They cited examples of the diversion or misappropriation of donor funds intended for projects for the poor to personal gains and the unfair distribution of donor resources to the intervention areas or communities. Another CSO respondent lamented:

“Our greatest weakness is corruption, which we are all angry about. As Mother Theresa once said: ‘God provided enough for our needs in this world but not our greed’. Greed is our biggest problem. I will emphasize the danger of greed with the story of the three greedy hunters. CS is as corrupt as Government. Corruption impoverishes everyone, destroys or circumvents institution and structures, destroys the tenets of democracy, and leads to distrust and mistrust of one another and government”.

Another respondent was of the view that CSOs [are] not willing to be accountable; yet they want government to be accountable to them and the people (sic).

On a whole, corruption compromises the quality of CSOs interventions and the credibility of CSOs and government among donors and the public — this becomes a challenge to the sustainability of CSOs in Ghana, and must be fought.

🕒 5.7. Politicisation and Partisan Labelling

It came up strongly that in Ghana's political dispensation, the work of CSOs especially on advocacy is subtly being undermined by partisan political lenses depending on the government and opposition parties of the day. This often results in labelling CSOs as either doing the bidding of the government or the opposition. According to the CSOs, besides the partisan labelling, some CSOs in Ghana cannot also exonerate themselves from partisanship due to their own conduct, actions and inactions. Eventually, CSOs who do not want to be part of the politics of the government or the opposition generally shy away from doing effective advocacy that is, speaking for the voiceless and holding duty bearers accountable for their stewardship.

06

**STRATEGIES,
INNOVATIONS AND
RESPONSES TO THE
CHANGING CLIMATE**





➡ 6. STRATEGIES, INNOVATIONS AND RESPONSES TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE

Perhaps, the commonest strategy currently being employed is the formation of networks, alliances and coalitions. In an ever-more tightly constrained funding era, competition for the few available resources among CSOs is becoming quite common. CSOs thus consider strengthened relationships with donors, governments, private sector and among other CSOs very critical in surviving the changing trend in the development landscape in Ghana. The sector now has several of these networks, alliances and coalitions, sometimes in the same field. These networks have stated aims and somehow overlapping mandate to genuinely promote development but their formation has also been in response to donor requirements and the pressure on national CSOs to join networks so as to obtain funding to carry out their roles. Thus, it is becoming a common practice for several CSOs to join networks to boost their chances of getting funds or raising their profile when the network in question is successfully able to effect policy change.

Another strategy currently being employed relates to diversification and 'hedging' of financial resources. There is greater sense that the development landscape in Ghana is becoming quite sophisticated in view of the changing trend of funding and the general changes of actors and practices characterising the landscape. CSOs will need to develop a suite of new skills, competencies and capacities in learning, fund raising, mediation, and bridging, dialoguing and influencing policies at both national and local levels. For many, the changing landscape itself brings a number of opportunities that organisations, be it NGOs, CBOs or networks, can embrace as far as building new competencies and capacities are concerned as well as being more innovative and improving dialogue across several levels. Rather than heavily relying on external funding, some learning taking place relate to the need for CSOs to diversify revenue sources and donors. In this regard, CSOs are trying to reduce dependence on traditional sources (usually from the traditional donors) to establish as many different sources of funding as possible. For most of the national and locally-focused CSOs, these might include simultaneously seeking funds from different international CSOs, multilateral and bilateral agencies, Government Departments, partnerships with industry and the private sector. Other organisations are also broadening their funding base and sources with a focus on income generating activities such as microfinance components of projects. Still others are forging strong partnerships and networks with notable credible organisations, think tanks and universities so as to improve their policy analysis and engagement skills with the end goal of making more impact at policy levels. Others perceive learning opportunities in the area of workshops, as a result of the different networks they belong to.

In a related strategy, it was also gathered that the changing development landscape is gradually changing the identity of some CSOs as non-profit making entities. While charity and advocacy still remain their dominant focus, many of them are developing 'business minds' and consequently establishing income generating wings to support

their revenue generation efforts, often in a way that run counter to the traditional spirit of voluntarism. Some of the CSOs have established (commercial) research and consultancy wings where they provide some services to interested clients for a fee; others have established microfinance units, where they provide loans and credits to their clientele for an interest. This is labelled as innovation and they hold great promise in bringing in additional resources to support the operations of such CSOs. They form a part of a larger move towards the turn of social enterprises. The scope, modus operandi and the focus of many of these social enterprises are varied. A number of these social enterprises and approaches have been elaborated upon in the case studies output of this research.

Additionally, credibility building and policy influencing skills have emerged as an important survival strategy. It has been highlighted from the foregoing discussion that one of the defining characteristics influencing receipt or approval of funding from donors and philanthropists as well engagement of CSOs by government in the policy circles relate to the perceived credibility and capacity of the organisation in question. As one respondent commented:

“donors can even call you and give you money to do work if you have the track record and [are] also credible”.

This perceived credibility as a factor determining ‘unsolicited’ inflow of funds has meant that CSOs are now repositioning themselves to be more credible in terms of capacity by occupying several policy spaces. There is therefore increasing investment into media reportage of activities and events undertaken by the CSOs to improve their visibility. This has often led to several CSOs forming relationship and partnership with journalists and media houses while a large part of project resources are also spent on buying newspaper space or providing some incentives to journalists to write stories on the activities of the CSOs. Such ‘visibility politics’ enhance the credibility and track records of many of the organisations. Yet, it is not so pervasive among the CSOs located outside Accra, Kumasi and other regional capitals.

CSOs are increasingly adopting diverse cost-cutting measures as a way of strategically positioning themselves in the face of the changing development landscape. These cost-saving measures are informed partly by the narrative of value for money, the acute fiscal constraints in many of their sources of funds and the need to ‘survive’ in an era of general dwindling of funds. Such cost-saving measures have led to “borrowing words and approaches from the public and the private sectors” remarked one respondent. Words such as ‘rationalisation’, ‘downsizing’, ‘reforms’, ‘re-structuring’, ‘laying off staff’ and so on, fly in bewildered mix in the sector. The cost-saving measures and the strategic repositioning of the CSOs have resulted in reducing the number of staff of organisations in several cases, merging and regrouping job responsibilities in a way that staff can take on several tasks simultaneously, reducing the coverage or operational areas in the country and re-focusing aims of projects towards a very specific output or outcome which is easier to measure. Many others are developing



organisational systems and procedures that reduce excessive waste and leakage such as bid analysis for all goods and services procured, timely auditing and strong emphasis on 'receipts' for all transactions. Increasingly, several CSOs are also deepening the use of local structures and resources to reduce cost and also to achieve many of their development objectives.

The discussions and interviews held in the course of the study also revealed that several organisations are now beginning to consider formalised collaborations and partnerships as a way to respond to the changing resource environment and minimize competition for funding sources. For example, many of the NGOs outside the regional capitals considered partnerships with international NGOs such as Action Aid, Oxfam and Care International as one of the key strategies being employed to remain sustainable. This practice has also been observed in the USA and elsewhere (Connolly and York, 2002; Renz et al., 2010). This is occurring as non-profit leaders are seeking each other out to explore potential partnerships, and also through funders themselves that are trying to maximise impact with limited resources (Renz et al., 2010).

Throughout this chapter, it has been shown that several CSOs in Ghana are strategically positioning themselves through several means in order to survive the changing landscape. The extent to which these strategies can contribute towards a shift from surviving to thriving can be determined overtime.



07

**CULTIVATING
SUSTAINABLE CSOs IN
GHANA: CAN MULTI-POOL
FUNDING MECHANISMS
BE THE KEY?**

➡ 7. CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE CSOs IN GHANA: CAN MULTI-POOL FUNDING MECHANISMS BE THE KEY?

In view of the changing development landscape and funding mechanisms, there is also an increasing shift from direct bilateral 'donor-to-NGO' grants towards what has become known as 'pooled funding mechanism'. In this regard, all the major development partners contribute their assistance into a single source or basket. One of such mechanisms currently running is STAR-Ghana.

STAR-Ghana is a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism funded by DFID, DANIDA, EU and USAID to increase the influence of civil society and Parliament in the governance of public goods and service delivery, with the ultimate goal of improving the accountability and responsiveness of Ghana's government, traditional authorities and the private sector. It expands and builds on previous programmes including the Rights and Voice Initiative (RAVI) (2004-2010); the Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) (2005-2011); KASA (2008-2010); and the Civil Society Governance Fund (CSGF) (2004-2010).

As this research reveals, STAR-Ghana will have a significant role to play in advancing the course of civil society sustainability, particularly in the changing development landscape. STAR-Ghana is already advancing practices and a discourse on sustainability initiatives within the civil society sector. What our findings suggest is that, funding mechanisms such as STAR-Ghana can play an enormous role and pathway for CS sustainability. At the same time the mechanism has serious limits; and may even create new difficulties for civil society sustainability. In this section, we outline some of the main potentials as well as weaknesses that funding mechanisms such as STAR-Ghana bring in the discourse and practice of the sustainability of civil society in Ghana.

➡ 7.1 STAR-GHANA: PERSPECTIVES ON THE MECHANISM

➡ 7.1.1 Financial and Technical Support

One of the consistent chorus that emerged from the study was that, several CSOs have received financial resources to support the projects and institutional development. STAR-Ghana was the most referenced or mentioned source of funding for the CSOs throughout the study. According to the CSOs, the multi-donor pooling mechanisms have supported CSOs to sustain their institutions and their projects. These have increased their presence and credibility among their constituents. Besides funding, reports suggest that the multi-donor pooling mechanism provided opportunities for information and knowledge sharing between and among CSOs. Again, the mechanisms provided different levels of technical assistance to CSOs in terms of capacity building and development of governance structures. A representative of a CSO notes that:

“These local and international development mechanisms play critical roles by providing funding and technical support to civil society organisations in Ghana. They have to some extent bridged the funding gap that many CSOs face in the country. Their technical support in the areas of financial management, monitoring and evaluation and advocacy to a large extent has and will contribute to the sustainability of CSOs in Ghana”.

Another CSO said that such mechanism provides:

“Timely funding opportunity for CSOs”. “They have helped in strengthening civil society organisations in demanding accountability from duty bearers, giving voice to the voiceless to be heard and strengthening CSO interactions with parliament”.

Corroborating on the potentials of STAR-Ghana, another respondents said that:

“They play [a] very good role in building CSOs to be able to function sustainably. They supported in building the capacity of local CSOs and enhanced citizen government engagement”.

🔄 7.1.2 Focusing Interventions on Priority Areas

A review of the discussion with stakeholders indicates that the multi-donor pooling mechanisms such as STAR-Ghana have attempted to focus and prioritize areas or sectors for development interventions by CSOs in Ghana. This approach according to some CSOs has helped to align CSOs work to national and international priority areas of Ghana — a trend that has probably contributed to reorienting the activities of CSOs to the bigger national development agenda. In this regard, a CSO notes that multi-donor pooling mechanisms are “very positive as these agencies provide project specific funds and provide a clear monitoring system for success”.

🔄 7.1.3 Controls and supervision of CSOs

The interviews and the online survey suggest that multi-donor mechanisms have always exercised some level of control and supervision on CSOs they support. According to the CSOs, the controls and supervision are to ensure value for money and the achievement of the desired impact projects. Additionally, the CSOs suggest that the multi-donor pooling mechanisms often insist on the establishment of functional governance institutions, financial and audit systems and structures as internal mechanisms for controls and accountability. The multi-donor mechanism also intermittently expects benefiting CSOs to furnish them with project narrative reports and audited financial statements. By supporting and demanding that partner CSOs establish functional systems and structures, they are in better a position to be effective and sustainable. As a comment from one respondent highlights:



“Their [multi-donor pooling mechanisms] technical support in the areas of financial management, monitoring and evaluation and advocacy to a large extent has and will contribute to the sustainability of CSOs in Ghana.

Some of these systems, structures and administrative support systems that STAR-Ghana emphasises by are very essential for longer-term attraction of funds and sustainability of the organisations. But a number of weaknesses that are antithesis to the course of sustainability were also highlighted, which we now turn attention to.

➡ 7.2 STAR-Ghana: A Half-full or a Half-empty Glass?

While STAR-Ghana is being praised for their contribution towards channelling of financial resources to support diverse programmes, a number of weaknesses and challenges were also mentioned in the course of the study which act against pathways for sustainability. These have been outlined below:

➡ 7.2.1 Discriminatory Tendencies Against ‘Smaller’ CSOs

Several respondents to the study expressed disappointments about the discriminatory, unfair and biased nature of such mechanisms such as STAR-GHANA against smaller CSOs. According to the interviews and on-line survey, some CSOs claim that the support to CSO through these mechanisms are often skewed towards well established, larger and nationally-based CSOs to the neglect of grass-root or community-based CSO.

The grass-root CSOs, they argue, are closer to the people but with limited resources to support their projects and their institutional sustainability. Yet these smaller and relatively younger CSOs are rather marginalized through a rather open expression of interest process instead of through a clustering regime. By the clustering regime, national CSOs and community/grassroots CSOs should be clustered and made to express interest dedicated to their cluster. Some CSOs therefore accuse the multi-donor pooling mechanisms of being unfair and biased towards the national CSOs. A respondent said:

“One weakness that I see is that much of the support goes to already made CSOs working at the national level. It’s important to do more with less developed CSOs in the districts and communities to build their capacities to deliver effectively”.

Other representatives of a CSO observe:

“STAR-Ghana concentrates more on big organisations to the detriment of the small ones”.

“Most of the capacity building programmes for CSOs they (STAR-Ghana) organise are only for their grant partners but not other CSOs”.

The CSOs left out of these trainings are rather the CSOs that need to build or strengthen their capacities and systems to be able to better compete.

➡ 7.2.2 Prohibitive Selection Criteria

Another weakness that comes up is the eligibility criteria set out by multi-donor pooling mechanisms which CSOs would have to meet to be able to access support. Some CSOs claim that eligibility criteria are most often so prohibitive especially to small, emerging and grass root CSOs who desperately need donor support to carry out their projects and to strengthen their institutions for sustainability. As the small CSOs get crowded out through the competitive process by the multi-donor pooling mechanisms, the sustainability of such CSOs are threatened. A respondent notes the processes are “sometimes very complex and one really doubt their objectivity in assessing proposals”.

As a result, another respondent said that grants were: “limited to few CSOs and new entrants (CSOs) were encouraged because of [the] rigid schemes in place for qualification”.

➡ 7.2.3 Short-Term Project Support

There are concerns about the nature of support by the multi-donor pooling mechanism projects. Some CSOs have said that the grant support from these mechanisms are often for a short period. Reports suggest that the support often ranged between 1-2 years making it a challenge for CSOs to sustain their projects or interventions when funding ceases. Consequently, the inability of CSOs to sustain a project or intervention in a community may not only affect the image of the CSOs but also the future support for a CSO's projects by stakeholders may wither away. One respondent remarked:

“... Projects are usually one year which is difficult in some cases to track results. At least some project time lines should consider the nature of results anticipated”.

Additionally, some CSOs have also questioned the sustainability of the multi-donor pooling mechanisms since according to them, such mechanisms are themselves fragile. A representative of a CSO underscores this:

“They (the multi-donor pooling mechanisms) do not really help in CSO sustainability as they themselves are short-term initiatives”.

When such mechanisms fold up, it may create anxiety in the CSOs landscape; ultimately the sustainability of CSOs in the country will be threatened.



➡ 7.2.4 Limited Scope of Funding Windows

Some questions have been raised about the limited, rigid and rather donor-driven funding windows for development interventions. Some CSOs said they had to adjust to be able to respond to the request for expression of interest (Eoi). The paternalistic nature of such mechanisms have apparently caused some CSOs to chase funding calls or go where there is money instead of pursuing the needs of their constituents. To emphasise this issue, one CSO representative noted:

“Multi-donor pooling mechanism is rather weak in terms of being responsive to dynamics in public policy environment. Political economy analysis as basis for putting forward funding calls is limited and cannot anticipate any future trends”.

Another respondent notes that “inadequate inclusion of environmental issues are not inclusive”

Some CSOs therefore suggested that in order to promote sustainability of a CSO, there is the imperative need for STAR-Ghana to “widen their scope and avoid favouritism and insider trading”.

This suggestion may enhance the integrity of such mechanisms and objective disbursement of grants to deserving CSOs.

What the foregoing discussion draws attention to is that while STAR-Ghana has certainly been instrumental in supporting sustainability pathways through finance, capacity building and emphasis on systems and structures, it clearly also have some limits. The issues of discriminatory tendencies against ‘smaller’ CSOs, prohibitive selection criteria, short-term project support and limited scope of funding windows that emerged through the study must be addressed to maximise the potentials offered by the mechanism.



08

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to explore the state of sustainability of civil society in Ghana in the context of the changing development and funding dynamics. The study also sought to take into consideration how sustainability is defined across different actors and also against several indicators. Crucially, the effects of the changing landscape are experienced differently by different organisations. There is a general sense through the study that most 'small' CSOs based outside the capital do face a daunting challenge. This is not to say that those in the regional and districts capitals are not experiencing the challenging landscape. The overall picture deduced from this study is that several organisations are striving to operate; others are just surviving the change while many others are actually thriving, at least at present. The overall conclusion of the study is that the state of sustainability of civil society in Ghana can be described as very challenging but one that is not too gloomy to cause 'extinction' of civil society. There is some hope as some strategies and adaptations are already taking place. The following recommendations will however play key roles in supporting and promoting the sustainability of CSOs in Ghana.

8.2 Recommendations

In view of the foregoing discussions, the following recommendations have been proposed for consideration by CSOs to enhance their transition to a more sustainable path. The recommendations proposed here can be applied by any of the organisations that fall under the CS umbrella including non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, women's groups, youth networks, and international non-governmental organisations working with broad-based partners at the local (community) levels, professional associations and bodies and trade unions among others.

8.2.1 Diversification of Financial Resources

Diversification of financial resources should engage the minds, body and soul of CSOs in Ghana in order to stay sustainable. In addition to the traditional donors, the following broad sources of funds are recommended;

- **Explore domestic resource mobilisation:** Financial resources for development can be mobilized from domestic sources. Regular contributions and transfers from supporters, members and constituents (e.g. through mobile money transfers) can be a starting point for several organisations. Other mobilisation channels can include but not limited to actively seeking cash donations from individuals including wealthy and middle-income earners as well as the general public who might give to collection boxes placed at local businesses.

- **Explore crowd-funding and online fund-raising platforms:** Crowd funding is an emerging marketplace where charities and individuals work collectively to pool money together on behalf of a cause, project or business. Examples of crowd funding platforms that CSOs in Ghana can explore have been highlighted in Box 1.

Box 1: Examples of popular crowd funding platforms

GlobalGiving: is a global crowd-funding platform for charities, NGOs and CSOs in general. It is an online marketplace for philanthropy where anyone can post an idea and get it funded. The platform works by connecting donors with community-based projects they wish to make contribution to. Since its inception in early 2000s, GlobalGiving has so far raised more than \$12 million for over 1000 projects in over 70 countries. Its first project was a toilet block at a school in India. For more information see: <http://www.globalgiving.co.uk/help.html>

Change.org: This is an online platform that helps to raise awareness about important social causes and to empower people to take action, chiefly through partnerships with leading non-profits. Apart from petitions, CSOs across the world can also raise funds by creating a page with photos, videos, logos and supporting materials. Change.org's fundraising pages use donation widgets with progress thermometers that track the amount raised. Basic membership is free; it costs \$20 a month for those who want customized pages. For more information, visit <https://www.change.org>.

Just Give is an online fund-raising platform where CSOs and organisations registered as charities can set up a page to solicit donations and also set up a 'Donate Now' button which they can use on their own sites. There is no cost for setting up account or even monthly fees. However, donation processing attracts a fee of 3%. For more information, visit <https://www.justgive.org>

Universal Giving: This is a marketplace that allows people to give and volunteer with projects all over the world. Unlike JustGive where donation attracts a small fee, this platform passes along 100 percent of all the donations made by donors to charities of their choice. For more information, visit: <http://www.universalgiving.org>

- **Experiment with Diaspora philanthropy:** Diaspora philanthropy is growing in new ways that offer fund-raising opportunities for civil society organisations in Ghana. The interest in diaspora philanthropy is part of the growing interest in the broader role of Diasporas in community and national development. The diaspora community, whether individuals or in associations, are often looking for different ways and avenues to contribute to development projects in their home countries. Monetary transfers – including philanthropy and remittances – constitute only one element of how Diasporas contribute to their countries of origin. Technology transfer, intellectual contributions, advocacy and results communications are some the means through which the Diaspora community contributes to development. The onus lies on leadership of CSOs to make connections and contacts to these untapped resources to generate the necessary financial and technical capacity that might contribute to their sustainability. This is not necessarily a daunting task as members of the diaspora communities themselves are often seeking ways to contribute to and maintain ties with their countries of origin (Johnson: 2007).



- **Venture into social enterprises:** In a sector reliant on constant fundraising, sustainable funding is indeed a crucial issue. Social enterprises offer another prospective channel for CSOs to diversify resources, generate additional income and remain sustainable. Social enterprise models typically focus on how some specific activities central to the organisation's mission can generate income. When nurtured well, social enterprises ensure sustainability as well as scalability – the ability for projects to expand based on limited investment funding. (For more information on social enterprises, see case studies attached to the report).
- **Set up profit-based subsidiary enterprises:** One way through which CSOs can further raise financial resources to support their operations involve setting up subsidiary enterprises or commercial ventures that they own and run. These enterprises can either be self-standing commercial enterprises with clear profit-orientation or complementary for-profit enterprises with developmental goals embedded in it such as the high street shops operated by Oxfam.

➡ 8.2.2 Institutionalization of Structures and Practices of Good Governance are Valuable

Throughout this report, the importance of institutionalisation of sound systems, structures and accountability mechanisms have been stressed, as they are very important to sustainability. In building blocks for sustainability, CSOs should not only be upwardly accountable to donors and governments– those that provide them with their financial and legal base but also downwardly accountable to their beneficiaries, inwardly accountable to themselves for their organisational mission, values, and staff and horizontally accountable to their peers. Additionally, sound financial management practices, human resource systems and structures and basic governance structures should be prioritised by both smaller and 'bigger' CSOs, networks, coalitions, NGOs and even professional bodies. Such systems enhance creditability, trustworthiness, legitimacy and recognition, which are critically needed in the changing development and funding mechanisms.

➡ 8.2.3 Invest in Capacity Building even in the Face of Dwindling Funds

The importance of institutional capacity has also been stressed in this report as far as sustainability of programmes and longer-term existence of organisations are concerned. A sustainable CSO is one, which is not just surviving but is healthy and has the capacity to remain resilient to pursue its programmes in the face of a changing development landscape. Even in the face of financial difficulties, new competencies, skills and knowledge are required in several aspects of the organisation including fund-raising, how to remain visible, ability to influence policy, and gain support from constituency and partnership formation. CSOs should therefore invest in capacity building of dedicated staff in these areas.

➡ 8.2.4 Conduct a Periodic Health Check on Relevance, Mission and Programmes

The CSO sector is very dynamic and always going through systematic and paradigmatic shifts and trends. Over the years, the sector has witnessed a shift from relief to service provision and now an increasing focus on advocacy and rights-based approaches to development. The sector has also witnessed a shift from increased focus on individuals then to communities and to societies as a whole. Remaining relevant is itself a building block for sustainability. CSOs should therefore do a periodic reflection and health check to determine the relevance of their mission and programmes at particular points in time.

➡ 8.2.5. Share Results Broadly and Invest In Visibility

In the changing development landscape, organisations that remain visible in terms of impacts and influence are likely to attract funding that could make huge strides towards sustainability. CSOs should therefore cultivate a culture of communication of results of programmes and impacts. To this end, relevant publications such as annual reports, active engagement in social media such as Face Book will therefore be important.

➡ 8.2.6. Enhancing Quality of Service Delivery

To enhance quality of service of delivery, it is recommended that CSOs move from delivering general services to strategic services. While general services have been assessed to be the most crucial to sustain the life and livelihoods of target beneficiaries, they also tend to reinforce the welfare and service-provision perception of CSOs. The short and long-term sustainability of these services is suspect, as the funding is in short supply. Moreover, CSOs, may not necessarily have comparative advantages in providing the specific services they are currently offering. It is recommended that CSOs move beyond basic service to roles in which the organisations have (or can acquire) comparative and competitive advantages.

A key element in enhancing quality of service delivery is the need to transform the system of planning, resource mobilisation and management for results in CSOs. This entails a four-step system:

- Development of basic systems and procedures for planning that is based on membership needs as well as other strategic considerations.
- Budgeting based on the needs and capacity of the organisation
- Establishment of a system of results-oriented monitoring and evaluation.
- Staff training to cope with changes in organisational status, needs and orientations.

➡ 8.2.7. Enhancing Influential Power

Direct policy influence by CSOs on government is intrinsically related to the strength of national “umbrella” bodies whether in the form of coalitions, networks or platforms. GAPVOD was formed in the 1990s to serve such purpose as well as provide training services for the voluntary sector, but lacked the convening mandate from the NGOs and never able to garner sufficient legitimacy to speak with one voice for all CSOs. Although Church or faith-based umbrella bodies such the Catholic Bishops Conference and the National Catholic Secretariat, the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Muslim Council have been influential and have greater convening powers, they are not always able to carry their members along when they wish, especially when they take strong stance in policy and political debates. Going forward, it is recommended that CSOs consider building strategic alliances with non-formalized influential actors who have established reputation and leading local and international NGOs, as well as institutions in the public sector. A small number of alliances will need to be cultivated and developed in the medium to long-term. Three such alliances are suggested: Alliance to acquire Organisational Development Expertise; Alliance for Policy Advocacy; and Alliances with Faith-based Organisations

➡ 8.2.8. Leadership Matters!

Leadership must be part of debates about sustainability of CSOs. This is because when leadership is weak, uninspiring, indecisive, unmotivated, non-charismatic and myopic, there is a high chance that such organisations will fail to survive. CSOs should invest in inspirational and visionary leaders with understanding of the changing development landscape so as to drive the mission in a way that is relevant in contemporary terms. Leadership of CSOs should also be well abreast with the total health of their organisations including projections, budget, surplus and general trends of financial performance. In this way, actions can be redirected in a more sustainable path.

➡ 8.2.9. Strategic Alliances with Private Sector can be Invaluable

Private sector firms are currently pursuing wide range of corporate social responsibility programmes rooted in the social and developmental mission of several CSOs in Ghana. This is a great opportunity for CS to enhance their sustainability by leveraging on the wealth of the private sector, through mutually benefitting strategic alliances and partnership. CSO-private firm partnership can also contribute to sustainability in a number of ways. These can include capacity building and trainings for CSOs in areas such as marketing and visibility, ‘free’ auditing of financial statements, financial planning and many more. It can further help CSOs to, through CSR, provide crucial services and interventions to communities without necessarily engaging in long-term development programmes. Lindenberg (2001) has for instance described several surprising CSO-private partnerships, and shows how these partnerships can help civil society to enhance their capacity and sustainability in mutually beneficial

ways. For example, he describes how CARE's partnership with Starbucks evolved from philanthropic, to transactional, and then to integrative, resulting ultimately with staff from CARE receiving training in areas like marketing and human resources from Starbucks, and Starbucks staff serving on CARE's board committees. In the context of this study, we noted that SEND Ghana is seriously considering partnership with 'like-minded' private firms to submit joint proposals for development-oriented consultancy assignments from public institutions (SEND, 2013). Starting a partnership with a private firm might not always be easy due to the separate traditions each comes from. Such partnerships should be driven by alignment of interests (i.e. the partner company and the mission of CSOs should be aligned to a large extent).

➡ 8.2.10. Planning for Sustainability is key

Just as CSOs are investing in strategic plans, there should also be conscious planning for sustainability of CSOs which take into consideration emerging threats, mitigation options, capacity building, how programmes can be sustained and what investments are required for longer term sustainability and existence of organisations. Such planning remains an important starting point for sustainable CSOs.



2 PART

LEARNING ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY: THREE CASES

The foregoing discussion has emphasised that, many civil society entities are operating in a very challenging development landscape characterised by competitive and dwindling funding environment and difficulty in sustaining and expanding operations. In view of this, proactive means of building civil society sustainability in the context of the changing development landscape for civil society is more necessary than ever. An important question that often arises is: what examples of models of sustainability can civil society in Ghana learn from? This is the central question addressed by this paper. In what follows, we provide brief cases of how some organisations are thinking and approaching the issue of sustainability. Drawing on these cases, we provide a taxonomy of models of sustainability that civil society organisations in Ghana can relate to. It must be emphasised here that these models are not definitive, but only offer an indication to what other organisations have adopted to ensure they are sustainable, financially and operationally even if the outcomes are so far mixed.

CASE 1:

Sustaining through subsidiary profit-based enterprises: The case of AfriKids

AfriKids is a partnership between a UK charity, AfriKids (UK), and a Ghanaian non-governmental organisation, AfriKids Ghana. It is a child rights organisation working to improve lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the Upper East Region of Ghana. From a very humble beginning in 2005, AfriKids is today a force to reckon with in the areas of child rights programmes. It has over the years been very active and functional in addressing several fundamental challenges facing children in northern Ghana. Its work has focused on some pressing issues such as the 'spirit child' phenomenon, child labour and child trafficking.

A snapshot of some programmes

- **New Beginnings Phase One:** The new beginning interventions were under two main programmes of the organisation. They were the Bolgatanga Area Programme (BAP) and the Talensi Nabdam Area Programme (TNAP). These interventions aim to resettle 60 children who had been displaced through poverty or child labour and to build the capacity of field staff supporting these and other children. In 2012, 58 out of the 60 children received material and mentoring support and were provided with an investment package to help advance their careers or education, as direct support phased out in 2013.
- **New Beginnings Phase Two:** The phase 2 included programmes such as the Kassena Nankana Area Programme (KNAP) and continuation of the BAP and the TNAP. With the support of Comic Relief, these interventions aim to resettle street and working children and build the capacity of their families, schools and communities to support them. In 2011, 200 children were identified in partnership with the Ghana Education Service and District Assemblies and supported to enter full time formal education or training.
- **New Beginnings Phase Three under (TNAP):** AfriKids Ghana has attracted local funding partners enabling them to take on additional beneficiaries to New Beginnings. In 2012 funding from the UN Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery was extended to continue the support of ten former child miners. A partnership with NECPAD (Network for Community Planning and Development), a national NGO via the support of the International Labour Organisation, helped to support 185 children involved in mining to re-engage with full time education. Teepalig Waisenkinder project (TNAP) In 2012 AfriKids Ghana worked directly with a German foundation to help resettle 30 children who had been living in a children's home that had closed down.



- **The Education Bridge under KNAP, BAP and TNAP:** This project is sponsored by the Department for International Development (DFID) Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) to bridge the gap between educational policies and the reality as experienced by vulnerable children. In 2012 the area programmes continued to work with 75 communities to form education committees, school management committees and child rights clubs.
- **The Spirit Child Programme under KNAP:** This project which began in 1997 as 'Operation Sirigu' has continued its awareness raising and family reconciliation work in 2012 for approximately 30 communities families. The focus of the project is on breaking down the belief in 'spirit children' and ending the practice of child abuse and infanticide associated with it.
- **School of Night Rabbits:** This project provides transitional education to children living on the streets of Bolgatanga two nights a week and provides them with basic sanitation and food supplements and cultural activities. In 2012, about 150 children attended the school.
- **AfriKids Academy under BAP:** This ICT academy provides free ICT education to all middle school leavers and ICT teachers in the Bolgatanga district and offers fee paying classes to adults. In 2012 2,119 children and 200 teachers were trained.
- **Young Entrepreneurs Programme:** This project offers transitional support for young adults graduating from residential care at AfriKids' partner projects and moving on to independent adulthood. In 2012, 13 young adults were supported in vocational and tertiary education.
- **AfriKids Education Fund:** This centrally managed fund provides scholarships to students who fall outside of AfriKids' projects' remit but who apply with a clear need for financial support. In 2012 over 100 children were supported at all levels of the schooling system.
- **Operation Mango Tree:** This is a partner project run and managed by local boards but supervised by AfriKids Ghana. The project provides long-term foster care to more than 35 children for whom life in their family home is no longer possible either because they have been orphaned or badly abused. The home is ran by a woman called Mama Laadi. In 2012, the home was recommended to be one of the Upper East's three official Children's Homes under the Care Reform Initiative, which is reviewing the status and conditions at all homes in the country. Alongside the foster home, the project also runs Mama's Place, guesthouse.
- **Operation Bolgatanga:** This is also a partner project providing transitional residential care for children living and working on the streets of Bolgatanga. In 2012 children who had either been resettled from the NGH or who were at risk of becoming street children were given educational support in their family homes

as well as children intercepted whilst being trafficked were given temporary care at the home along with other children using its 'drop in' services. Thirty children were given longer term residential care and gradual resettlement support. The home was also recommended to be one of the Upper East's three official Children's Homes under the Care Reform Initiative.

- **Operation Zuarungu Centred on the Grace International School:** This partner project provides education and family support to over 400 vulnerable children in a rural setting. In 2012 AfriKids continued to fund the school's improvement plan which will enable it to become a model school for the region. The Ghana Education Service took on more of its running costs and management responsibility. The need for financial support from AfriKids lessens with each year as the school gets closer to full independence from the charity, expected to be achieved by 2014-15.
- **Operation SINGh:** This is the second phase of 'Support in Northern Ghana (SINGh)' continued in 2012. It has supported 150 children with educational materials and their families with National Health Insurance and 'goats for fees' to ensure that the families have a new stream of income to help pay schooling costs after the project ends. Under the scheme, the families are given two goats for rearing. The income from this is earmarked for the child's education.
- **Operation Smiles:** This project is based in rural Nakwabi in the Northern Region and it is ran by one Sr. Jane Naaglosegme, AfriKids' original and longest standing partner. As well as supporting a network of mothers through microfinance and vocational training, 'Operation Smiles' runs a transitional programme for babies whose mothers die in childbirth. The children are taken in with a carer (often an older sister or aunt) who is taught parental skills as the babies build up their strength and are then resettled in their family's home after 3-6 months.
- **G.A.S. Partnership:** This partnership between the Ghana Health Service in Upper East Region, AfriKids and Southampton University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has facilitated training visits to the Upper East Region across five clinical and non-clinical specialties namely, maternity, paediatric health, imaging and diagnostics, safe surgery and estates planning. They work with all seven-district hospitals and the regional hospital in the UER and provide continuous professional development training to all professionals in the region in each clinical area. An 'ambulance rally' from Southampton to Ghana also took place in May to raise funds for the partnership and deliver two four wheel drive vehicles for conversion to ambulances.

Sources of funds for operations

Where do the funds for the operations of Afrikids come from? The main source (s) of funds for Afrikids Ghana has been Afrikids UK which fundraises for and support the former in Ghana to deliver the child rights programme being run in the Northern

Region of Ghana. From an initial income portfolio of about £170,000, Afrikids now run programmes valued at approximately £ 2 million (See figure 13).

However, having worked as the main fund-raiser for Afrikids Ghana for over a decade, Afrikids UK has made a strategic decision to close down in 2018. The implication here is that funding for the programmes from Afrikids UK would cease but Afrikids Ghana is still expected to source its own funds to implement and expand the existing programmes in Ghana. This clearly brings to light a number of critical issues and questions about the sustainability of the Afrikids Ghana in the longer term, its operations and interventions and the finance needed to grease the wheel of its activities. But Afrikids Ghana and Afrikids UK have both been innovative to ensure programmes and impacts continue unaltered. We now turn attention to this.

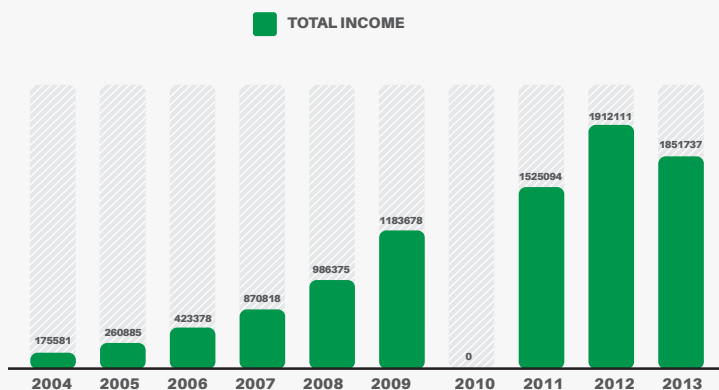


Figure 13 Actual total income for Afrikids (2004-2013)

Source: Compiled from Afrikids Audited Accounts (2004-2013).

*2010 record was not available.

Model and Sustainability Strategy

Discussions about the future of Afrikids Ghana were intrinsically linked to its set up, expansion and growth. The organisation has therefore put in place, what is now known as AfriKids' enterprise portfolio (of Sustainability Projects) as a major component in AfriKids Ghana's financial and operational sustainability strategy. This entailed a focus on rigorous financial and social return appraisals of a suite of enterprises to be implemented collaboratively between AfriKids UK and Ghana, and also designed and delivered in close partnership with local stakeholders. To date, the portfolio includes (i) setting up and investing in the AfriKids Medical Centre; (ii) selling of energy efficient cook stoves to reduce global emissions while generating profits, and (iii) further investments in tourism and hospitality.

1. The Medical Centre

Consequent to its sustainability strategy, the AfriKids Medical Centre was bought in 2006 with the main goal to raise income for the running of AfriKids Ghana and also improve quality, range and access to medical care for the community in Bolgatanga and its surrounding areas. The Medical Centre, which has been accredited as a Primary Hospital in 2009 offers a combination of private and public healthcare through the Ghanaian government's National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and treated over 65,000 outpatients in 2013 alone (Afrikids, 2015).

Since 2006, several improvements have been made to the Medical Centre so as to meet the growing demands of its rapid growth, including investment in buildings and equipment; the construction of 3 new wards, as well as a Maternal Health Unit, and the appointment of key specialists. A five year strategy has also been put in place to guide the development of the Centre including a strong focus to address the need for general high quality outpatient services as well as enabling the development of specialist services for women and children.

Between 2008 and 2010, there was about 600% increase in patients with current compound annual growth standing at the rate of 61.3%. Crucial to the vision and objective of the investment in the Centre relates to its ability to generate income—and even profits—to support the programmes and operations of Afrikids Ghana. The Centre has not failed in this expectation and has been generating profits and returns which are being used to run the diverse programmes of Afrikids. In 2012 for instance, profit after tax was GHC 322300 (£64,465) which contributed to GHC 500000 (equivalent of £108,943) as cumulative retained earnings of the centre according to its 2012 audited reports. In 2013, the Centre recorded revenue of 2.2 million Cedis, proving that the enterprise in northern Ghana can work for both social and financial returns. Presently, the Medical Centre is the lifeblood of AfriKids in Bolgatanga. It is an institution that all the approximately 180 strong staff are immensely proud of, making a positive impact on the healthcare, lives and livelihoods of a very poor region, and also generating profits which are being used to pay for operational expenses to keep programmes running.

In an interview with Mr Felix Wood, of AfrikidsUK, he was very confident that by the current rate of work and projections, the Centre can be sustained after UK exits. Even more importantly, the Centre can continue to generate returns which can be used to support and sustain the operations of Afrikids Ghana—after the close down of Afrikids UK.

Through the Centre, Afrikids has also brokered a partnership with the Ghana Health Service and Southampton Hospital which will see the latter building the capacity of the region's healthcare workforce through training and equipment donations. The Medical Centre offers exceptional employment and training opportunities locally to over 85



permanent staff and 28 locum staff in the medical and caring professions.

2. Energy for Life Initiative

The 'Energy for Life Initiative' is AfriKids' first local sales and distribution business that is currently selling energy-efficient charcoal cook stoves in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Part of the reasons for the investment into this initiative relates to the fact that respiratory illness has been the second-most prevalent illness diagnosed at the AfriKids Medical Centre. The initiative is thus expected to contribute to reduced carbon emissions while also generating social and financial returns to support Afrikids' programme.

The initiative is being delivered in partnership with supplier, Envirofit and sponsor, Vitol. The primary phase of the 'Energy for Life Initiative' was launched in December 2012 and expected to see over 15,000 clean cook stoves sold in Bolgatanga and surrounding areas annually. The Envirofit CH-2300 cook stove is modelled on the traditional charcoal cook but its design and technology features enables it to consume up to 60% less fuel and emits up to 80% less harmful smoke and gases (Afrikids, 2012).

In addition to the expected benefits to end users, the 'Energy for Life Initiative', is forecast to generate £20,000 a year for AfriKids Ghana's programmes and projects. It remains an important part of the sustainability strategy of Afrikids UK and Afrikids Ghana. At current conditions, it is expected that the project will continue to generate returns which can be used to support and sustain the operations of Afrikids Ghana—after the close down of Afrikids UK.

3. Afrikids' Blue Sky Lodge

The Afrikids' 'Blue Sky Lodge' is one of the organisation's suite of sustainability projects aiming to generate both social and financial returns to support the programmes of the organisation. The Lodge, which is set over 23 acres of savannah, comprises 31 guest rooms, restaurant and bar facilities, a conference and events centre, leisure and activities including community tourism and what appears to be the first swimming pool of the area.

The investment decision into tourism and hospitality facility was a result of years of market research, expert consultancy and the practical experience of, a small guesthouse—called Mama's Place—in Bolgatanga, set up with support from Afrikids to help with the costs of Mama Laadi's Foster Home. The investment decision has also been informed by the need to among other things generate profit and diversify the existing limited and saturated jobs market for the local people.

The project, which collaborates with partners like Architecture for Humanity (UK)

and GABCON in Ghana, is expected to generate a profit of about £180,000 per annum—which is one-third of the total annual budget of AfriKids Ghana. As the project documentation states, “this is enough to ensure, 1,800 mothers are empowered to generate their own income or 150 schools are supported to create school improvement plans”. Consequently, ‘Blue Sky Lodge’ is expected to continue to generate returns which can be used to support and sustain the operations of AfriKids Ghana—after the close down of AfriKids UK.

Future Prospects and Outlook

With less than three years left for AfriKids UK to withdraw from providing funds for the Ghana operations, AfriKids Ghana faces a challenging future as far as funding is concerned. But there is so much hope, a hope offered by the suite of subsidiary enterprises pursued by AfriKids Ghana. The prospects in terms of revenue generation from the three businesses are very bright. The organisation continues to invest heavily in results and impacts communication¹ plus a focus on raising the proportion of unrestricted funding for its programmes (See fig. 14). A discussion with a staff during this study shows that the impacts of the shock associated with the withdrawal of AfriKids might not be significantly felt as these enterprises are making up for what AfriKids UK would have provided.

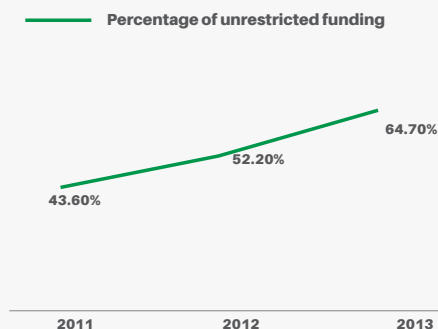


Figure 14 Percentage of unrestricted funds (of total income) 2011-2013

Source: Compiled from AfriKids Audited Accounts (2011-2013).

¹ In 2008, AfriKids was featured in a documentary called ‘How to Make A Difference in Africa’ which was produced by Storyhouse Films with BAFTA and Emmy award-winning journalist, Sorious Samura. This 50-minute film which was aired on BBC showed how AfriKids is a ground-breaking NGO, committed not just to handouts for the poor, but to empowering people to make a lasting positive change to their own lives. The film can be viewed here: <http://www.afrikids.org/how-to-make-a-difference-in-africa- documentary>



CASE 2:

SUSTAINING THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: **The case of Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition**

The Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition (GTLC) is a beneficiary of the STAR-Ghana civil society sustainability initiative. Established in 2006, the GTLC is a coalition representing 106 member organisations, with a focus on advocacy and trade policy development in the agricultural sector in particular. It is an umbrella organisation of farmers and producers, with the commitment to campaigning to influence policies necessary to guarantee better quality of life for farmers and producers.

The GTLC has developed successful strategies to achieve its advocacy goals, including effective media campaigns. Among the objectives and programmes of the GTLC are advocacy for appropriate allocation and utilization of public and private resources to increase productivity in order to ensure food and income security, and to support the democratic participation of producer groups and other civil society organisations in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national trade and agricultural policies and plans, and their management. The target of GTLC is to influence policy change such as guaranteed prices for rice, tomato and poultry farmers, protection and investment through use of tariffs, and the support to farmers to enable them to increase productivity. One of the strategies of the coalition is to build capacity of its members towards informed engagements with their peers and with policy makers in decision making processes.

Sources of funds for operations and sustainability strategy

Historically, GTLC has been funded through solidarity relationships with International NGOs and other external donor funding. The funding gave them some autonomy and flexibility as well as independence to pursue their mandate as advocacy oriented organisation. But with external sources of funding drying up and with little promise of adequate funding from the Traditional sources, the organisation has proactively and strategically repositioned itself into a hybrid organisation using what it terms “Business Advocacy Model”. This was significantly influenced by a study that was carried out in partnership with Bentley University in the USA.

GTLC has set up a social enterprise known as Tropical Oak Social Development Centre (TROSDEC), which has been established to provide agricultural services to its members and the general public at subsidized fees to raise income and resources to support its advocacy work. Although, it was initially registered as company limited by guaranteed, it has recently been re-registered as company limited by share or equity. The Centre is largely committed to a social mission of helping its members and other farmers

as well as pursuing revenue-generation objectives. The revenue-generation focus is a source of much-coveted unrestricted funding for new programs, interventions and other investments.

GTLC worked with 60 farmers in 2 locations in northern and southern Ghana to develop the business model which was translated into Business Plans (shea butter processing and farming) and with initial support from Christian Aid, acquired tractor equipment with full complements. The Business Plan attracted additional support from FinGAP, a USAID 'Feed the Future Program' in Ghana, to help TROSDC access finance to expand its equipment holding.

With support from the STAR-Ghana Sustainability Call, GTLC has over the past few months developed and approved a well-coasted five-year Strategic Plan (2015–2019) together with annualised plans and budgets as well as accompanying funding strategy. The funding strategy has ambitions of targeting corporate Ghana and holding of "Annual Fund Raising Week" with simplified and targeted messages. It also includes proceeds from the operations of the Tropical Oak Social development Centre and membership dues and subscriptions. The strategic plan includes measures to be taken to strengthen governance and accountability systems for both GTLC and subsidiary enterprise.

While the business is running, evidence generated from its operations and others will be used for policy advocacy work at both the local and national levels. GTLC will continue to conduct research and publish its flagship Annual Agro-Policy Barometer using evidence from its constituency and other areas to interrogate government policies and levels of programme implementation and impact on the lives of poor women and men small-scale producers in Ghana. This will be hugely informed by the Policy Monitoring and Evaluation System/Tool that has been developed and tested by GTLC. Funding for this work will be sourced largely from International NGOs and other external donor funding. The critical mass of about 30,000 farmers and service providers will serve as constituency, mobilised to engage in policy advocacy and engagement at both national and local levels

Future Prospects, Outlook and Conclusion

The GTLC social enterprise project is not yet operational. However, it is expected that 3 business centres will be established in Tamale, Accra and Wa. Projected subscriber base is expected to hit 30,000 farmers and service providers by 2019. This will bring additional resources to support the administrative and other cost of the organisation. It is envisaged that when fully operational, 70% of GTLC and the subsidiary company's administrative and other costs will be resourced from the operations of the Centre, and 30% from other sources including external donor funding. It is worthy to that when plans go as designed, GTLC will also be able to pay more attention to delivering its missions rather than the hustle of constantly pursuing donor funding—and ultimately to reduce their overall dependence on donor support.



Case 3:

SUSTAINING THROUGH Social Enterprise and Micro-Credits: The Case of SEND Ghana.

SEND-GHANA was established on August 4, 1998 with the maiden name Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa (SEND-West Africa). Today, SEND-WEST AFRICA is the mother organisation of SEND-GHANA, SEND-LIBERIA and SEND-SIERRA LEONE. These subsidiaries of SEND are independent national NGOs with their own National Executive Council and management systems but with one Chief Executive Officer based in SEND-GHANA who facilitates learning and networking among the national affiliates. From very humble beginnings, SEND Ghana has evolved into a reputable and credible national Non-Governmental Organisation with specialty in policy research and advocacy focusing on pro-poor policy and development programme monitoring in Ghana. It has carved a niche for itself especially in the areas of monitoring national budget implementation as well as statutory funds such as the District Assembly Common Fund (DAF).

Since its emergence SEND has progressed through four distinct phases to become one of the leading civil society organisations in West Africa. Phase one focussed mainly on establishing a co-operative approach to mobilizing and training farmers, women and youth to promote livelihood security. Soya bean production and nutrition education were the key activities. In Phase Two (2001-2004), the scope of the livelihood programme was expanded to include micro-financial services which targeted rural commercial women. At the same time, SEND's policy research and advocacy program was initiated to mobilise and train civil society organisations to monitor the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2001. The key project during this phase was the Ghana HIPC Watch, a project aimed at building capacities of grassroots-based civil society organisations in order to enhance the impact of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) on the livelihood security situation (food security and income) and welfare needs (health, education and water) of the resource- poor people of Ghana.

In Phase Three (2005-2008), SEND built grassroots coalitions to support its policy advocacy work. District HIPC Monitoring Committees, now called District Citizens Monitoring Committees (DCMCs) were led by local Focal NGOs. They worked with District Assemblies to monitor and hold government accountable for debt relief resources meant for poverty reduction. The experiences of the HIPC Watch Project were scaled up into the Grassroots Economic Literacy and Policy Advocacy Programme (GELAP). The geographical coverage was also increased from three administrative regions to seven. Activities of the livelihood program were expanded with emphasis on market access development using ICT and micro-financial services.

During Phase Four (2008-2012), SEND-Ghana saw major achievements at several levels. SEND-Ghana, SEND-Liberia and SEND-Sierra Leone were registered as national affiliates of SEND West Africa. SEND-Ghana served as the Secretariat for SEND West Africa, providing oversight and technical support to each affiliate. The management of SEND-Ghana was restructured and streamlined to be more accountable and transparent to the Board. A Senior Management Team was formed, and the financial and human resource management systems were revised and updated. The head office of SEND-Ghana was relocated to Accra from Tamale. Directors for SEND-Ghana, programmes and finance and human resources and administration were relocated to the Accra office.

Under its previous strategic plan, Eastern Corridor Livelihood Promotion Program (ECLSP) increased the operational districts from five to eight. These districts are in Northern and Volta Regions and are among the poorest 50 districts in Ghana. They are also conflict-ridden and prone to natural disasters. The ECLSP is an integrated development program comprising two key components: (i) micro-financial services and small-scale enterprise development, and (ii) food and nutrition security with peace building. Gender equality and equity promotion is a cross-cutting activity in each component. ECLSP contributed positively to the economic and social transformation of target communities. Institutional reforms, coupled with innovative programming strategies, empowered the beneficiaries with new platforms, technical and social skills to take advantage of opportunities to improve income, food and nutrition security.

These are examples of achievements under the food and nutrition security and peace education:

Under the Farmers Capacity Building Project, 47 family-based farmers' co-operatives expanded membership from below 2,000 to 5,000 and were reorganized into the Salaga, Chamba and Kpandai Zonal Co-operatives. Each Zonal Co-operative has an office facility with rooms for holding meetings and training workshops. The co-ops have become assertive in demanding extension services from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) for their members. Even more importantly, co-op meetings and activities are used to promote peace education and conflict management skills in all the operational communities across the districts.

The Eastern Corridor Agro-Marketing Information Centre (ECAMIC) innovated market access for farmers in two ways: by establishing inventory credit facilities that allow farmers to store their harvest while they search and negotiate for better prices; and the use of ICT, especially mobile phones, to monitor market prices and sell their crops. Thousands of individual farmers and women petty traders have adopted mobile technology to identify markets, track price movement and negotiate with customers.

- The sale of soya beans has boosted household income – income earned by farmers from the sale of soya beans rose from GHS 8,723.00 in 2001 to GHS 51,613.00 in 2012. Consumption of soya beans has reduced malnutrition among children. A



nutritional impact survey in 2008 found that the prevalence of undernourishment in the co-operative members had reduced – 8 percent stunted, 7 percent underweight and 4 percent wasted compared to 29, 21 and 13 percent respectively for non-co-operative households.

- Multifunctional platform machines to reduce women's workload in food processing were successfully piloted. These are owned by women's group of more than 200 members. The women are capable of operating and repairing the machines.
- The Climate Change Resilience Project is being successfully piloted in 5 communities and is empowering hundreds of women and men farmers with knowledge and skills to adapt climate change sensitive farming practices. For example, women groups are intercropping soya beans with drought resistant tree species in woodlots. In 2013, one of the women groups earned more than GHS 5,000 from the sale of soya beans.
- Through the use of gender model families, strengthening of community gender champions and gender training for men and women leaders in the credit unions and farmers' co-operatives, hundreds of male leaders have been mobilised and are supporting women's empowerment. Moreover, women have been equipped with knowledge and skills to serve as leaders in the farmers' cooperatives, community-based credit unions and the association of peace animators. Even more importantly, the entire leadership of the rural commercial women associations and women loans groups are women. Having confident and skilled women leaders in communities and within organisations ensures that gender issues remain a priority of SEND's programme in the Eastern Corridor.
- During this phase, GELAP underwent significant institutional strengthening with the establishment of the Ghana Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Network (PM&E Network), a membership-based network promoting inclusive processes of government and civil society organisations championing the promotion of good governance practices at national, regional and district levels.

SEND has also served as the Secretariat for the Ghana Aid Effectiveness Forum (GAEF), which comprised fourteen different civil society platforms with over 100 organisations working on women's rights, health, and education, access to information, governance, youth issues, agriculture and anti-corruption. SEND was able to facilitate these coalitions to undertake budget monitoring and advocacy activities. Advocacy activities focussed on accountability and transparency of the budget; poverty reduction; and compliance with the Accra Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Post-Busan Development Effectiveness Agenda.

In recognition of SEND-Ghana's innovative use of PM&E to advance the MDGs and good governance practices, it won the One Africa Award. SEND used the resources to acquire a permanent office in Accra, which houses both SEND Ghana's head office and the office of SEND West Africa.

Sustainability Model

Many of the programmes ran by SEND have been funded, sometimes in part, other times in full by donor agencies. However, recognising the risk of heavy dependence on a single donor and its general effect on the longer term existence and operations of the organisation, the management team of SEND has sought to advance sustainability along three main pathways: diversification of sources of funds, investment in social enterprises and building of grassroots capacity.

SEND recognised the risk involved in heavily relying on a single donor right from its start. Over the years, the organisation has therefore sought to build long-term partnerships with several donors for its diverse programmes. These include CORDAID, OXFAM GB and IBP. The last strategic plan of SEND from 2008 to 2013 (Phase Four) suffered serious challenges partly because of the changing development landscape. The global economic and financial crisis significantly transformed the NGO funding landscape. International NGOs that provided institutional and programme funding have either stopped entirely, or are only providing limited funding for programmes. Institutional or core funding is almost a thing of the past. The major sources for funding are multilateral, mainly for programming, and only accessed through competitive bidding. This contrasts its former approach which involved developing its own projects with communities and then seeking funding for them. This situation notwithstanding, SEND has been successful in winning projects funded by a number of new donor partners. Indeed, SEND's sustainability strategy has involved building partnerships with several donors for its diverse programmes. These donors have funded different elements of SEND's two main programmes of livelihood security and policy advocacy programmes at different stages of the growth of the organisation. With the increasing dwindling financial resources from traditional donors, the need to focus on domestic mobilisation and corporate sponsorships are beginning to engage the attention of the management team of SEND Ghana.

SEND Ghana is also successfully implementing its flagship 'SEND Financial NGO' (SENDFINGO) as a subsidiary and also a social enterprise. SENDFINGO was developed from the restructuring and amalgamation of three mini-projects implemented by SEND: Small-scale enterprise development targeting young entrepreneurs; development of community-based credit unions involving salaried workers and farmers; and micro-finance for rural commercial women. SENDFINGO has the main mission to promote socio-economic well-being of resource-poor men and women in northern Ghana by developing credit unions with micro finance orientation. This investment inherited more than US\$ 250,000 to serve as Trust Fund from CORDAID, Netherlands. SENDFINGO is managing two types of financial services: credit union funds which are mobilised by the members and women in the eastern corridor and also microfinance grant provided by CORDAID. As of 2010, SENDFINGO was operational in 9 districts including Gonja, Kpandai, Nanumba South, Chereponi, Zabzugu-Tatale, Tamale and East Mamprusi. Since its start, six credit unions have become full members of the Credit Union Association: Kpandai, Bimbilla, Salaga, Chamba, Tamale and Kete Krachi with the



capability of covering all their running costs. Since 2010, the combined financial assets of the Union have increased from 1.2 million to GHS 3.5 million, and loans to members from 1.1 million to 1.5 million by 2014. Surplus generated from interests on the loan are re-invested to sustain the programmes and the general operations of SEND Ghana.

SEND Ghana's sustainability strategy is also found in its investment into grassroots organisations championing policy advocacy in several districts in the country. Through its GELAP programme, the Ghana Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Network (PM&E Network) has been established. Membership consists of 50 District Citizen Monitoring Committees (DCMCs), 50 Focal NGOs, 50 district assemblies, and 4 regional councils (Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions). Also, national level CSOs serve on the Ghana PM&E Network. In total, the DCMC comprise 550 community-based development organisations. The PM&E Network is the main platform for executing GELAP activities, for example policy dialogues, at district, regional and national levels.

Through this network, SEND has been able to build its capacity and also enabled a lot of grassroots CBOs to stay relevant while also enabling transfer of key skills and knowledge to these organisations. The PM&E also increases the visibility and recognition of SEND. These are all important building blocks, which have the transformative power to attract financial resources from diverse sources to support the work of SEND. With GELAP SEND-Ghana influenced pro-poor programmes to maximise their impact on the poor's access to education, health services, credit facilities and market access. Through the project "Making District Assembly Common Fund work for the Poor," SEND-Ghana successfully led the campaign to operationalize the 2% share of the Common Fund for persons with disability. SEND's work on the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) has resulted in better targeting so that needy districts and communities can access the programme, especially in the Northern parts of the country. In addition, the programme purchases locally-grown food. Farmers and school management committees work together to support local agriculture. In 2009, SEND also started to monitor the implementation of Education Capitation Grants to improve on the management and utilization of the funds. SEND has increased awareness of the purpose of the Capitation Grant among the stakeholders, including head teachers, School Management Committees (SMCs), circuit supervisors and district staff of the Ghana Education Service.

SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION: Three Models of CSO (Financial) Sustainability Strategy

The cases presented above shows that civil society organisations are increasingly searching for alternative and complementary sources of income, so as to reduce their dependence on donor funds and also remain sustainable in the long time. The three cases presented above draw attention to some of the typology of approaches being adopted by different organisations as a way of expanding programmes and so remain sustainable, financially, operationally and even institutionally. Drawing on these cases, three main models for sustainability have been identified, which will be discussed hereunder. These are (i) social enterprises (ii) subsidiary profit-making enterprises (hybrid model) and (iii) microcredit. In what follows, we tease out some of the cross-cutting messages we encountered in the course of the study. We will begin with brief explanations of each of the model.

1. Social Enterprises

Social enterprise is increasingly gaining traction and popularity among donors and civil society organisations as an important model for building and advancing sustainability. It is seen 'an important revenue stream for non-profits, a new means of delivering welfare services, a consequence of a move from government [and donor grants] to contracts, and as a potential alternative to capitalism' (Teasdale, 2010). While the concept itself is not necessarily new, their emphasis in recent times in sustainability discourses invites a critical look and appreciation about their potentials, challenges and limitations especially in Ghana.

In spite of their ubiquitous nature, the meaning of social enterprises is varied. For some, the term is about the effort of existing not-for-profit making organisations to achieve sustainable impact through income generating activities. For others, it refers to self-funding businesses (Dees, 1998). Others also view it as the incorporation of an auxiliary activity without much concern for social benefit as well as an efficiency enhancing strategy for diversifying revenue streams (Alter, 2006). A recent paper published by the Overseas Development Institute (Griffin-EL and Darko, 2014; Smith and Darko, 2014) defined social enterprise as a business operation which has social or environmental objectives that significantly modify its commercial orientation. Here, social enterprise is seen as 'business operation' to give a sense that it is usually a non-state entity which engages in such operations to derive a significant proportion of its revenue from selling goods or services. In this paper, we have used social enterprise as a generic term for a non-profit business ventures or revenue-generating activities founded to create positive social impact.

An important characteristics of social enterprises is that they combine the social orientation and objectives of non-profit entities such as CSOs with the market-driven and profit orientation practices of businesses (Dees & Anderson, 2006; Porter &



Kramer, 2011; Alter, 2006; Panum and Hansen, 2014). Unlike businesses where socially-oriented practices such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are driven by motives of branding and increase in sales, social enterprises are driven by social good.

Social Enterprises are therefore largely committed to achieving a double end result—that is social mission as well as revenue-generation objectives. The revenue-generation focus is a source of much-coveted unrestricted funding for new programs and other investments for civil society. Such a focus also permit attention to missions and delivery rather than the hustle of constantly pursuing donor funding ultimately reducing their overall dependence on donor support. The particular social objectives depends largely on the mission and sector of the organisation and can range from providing economic opportunities to women groups or people at disadvantaged positions, disabled groups or at-risk populations. It is important that business skills, practices and entrepreneurship are always integrated into operations of social enterprises to aid successful running.

Current discourses on social enterprises emphasise that by harnessing the creativity and efficiency principles of private sector businesses, social enterprise offers a more creative and sustainable model for voluntary sector organisations which face increasing competition for scarce grants and private donations (Leadbeater, 2007, Dees et al, 2001). It is for this reason that policy makers in the United Kingdom established the 'Social Enterprise Unit' in 2001 to partially extend business support services to charities and other civil society groups (DTI, 2002: 21). The recent 'Growing Sustainable Business Initiative' (Hutchinson, 2007) championed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is also predicated on this ground. In Ghana, the STAR-Ghana has also created a component of sustainability initiatives in its portfolio in order to facilitate the existence and operations of many civil society organisations. But why are civil society organisations, donors and other actors in the third sector attracted to the idea of social enterprise? Is it really a sustainable model? What lessons do social enterprises offer for sustainability of civil society? We have attempted to tease out partial answers to these questions drawing on the case of Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition.

2. Subsidiary Profit-Making Enterprises (Hybrid Model)

Subsidiary services are not new concepts but their importance in discourses on sustainability is gaining traction in recent times. Although subsidiary enterprises bear resemblance with social enterprises, they are very distinct in many ways. Whereas social enterprises have a dual objective of social impact and revenue generation, subsidiary enterprises have strong profit-orientation although they can also serve complementary development goals. They are set up as purely commercial wings for organisations. Worldwide, a growing number of civil society organisations are resorting to these forms of subsidiary enterprises to generate funds to expand programmes

and also build institutional infrastructure and capacities of its staff. Examples of subsidiary enterprises across the world include Oxfam's high street shops, which sell wide range of products, Practical Actions' Publishing Services as well as Transparency International's anti-bribery training services. The case of Afrikids as presented above clearly fits this model. In thinking about ways of building sustainability and capacity for advancing long-term sustenance of organisations, subsidiary profit-making ventures can surely play important roles.

3. Micro-credits

There is intense debate about the place of micro-credits in the discourses of sustainability models for civil society. While in many ways, it can be a form of social enterprise or a subsidiary profit-oriented enterprise, microcredit is also seen as a model in its own right (Hailey, 2014). Although micro-finance has over the years been associated exclusively with small scale loans to individuals and businesses in poor communities, the situation is different in recent times. Today, it is used to describe a selection of financial products such as payments, savings and insurance that are adapted to meet the needs of low income individuals, businesses and NGOs. Micro-finance also serves people who do not have access to typical banking services.

In Ghana and elsewhere, several civil society organisations have strong constituents who have a clear need for microfinance opportunities. Compelling examples have shown that poor people often do not have access to cost effective money-lending facilities and face the challenge of taking on often unaffordable fees and interest rates on loans available in their local community. This limits growth and development while also putting additional financial pressure on low income families and serves to perpetuate the cycle of poverty. This provides a great opportunity for CSOs to strategize and meet this needs while also focusing on ways of generating additional income through, for instance, interest payments. One example we can draw lessons from in the area of microfinance as a sustainability model is the case of the Social Enterprise Foundation (SEND-Ghana) presented above.

TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: The potentials of these three models in Ghana?

This study, and the discussions that underlain it, reveal that all the three models under discussion (social enterprises, subsidiary profit-making enterprises and microcredit) could have important roles to play in connection with the financial sustainability of several organisations. This is even more critically particularly in the changing development landscape marked by dwindling foreign grants, strong competition for



finance and uncertainty. The study suggests that the three models under discussion can contribute to sustainability along two main ways².

First, the study shows that these models can serve as potential unrestricted sources of funds for several civil society organisations. Funding for activities of CS can broadly be categorised as restricted or unrestricted (which is an indicator of flexibility) and a short- or longer-term (an indicator of continuity). In the course of the study, it came to light that 'projectised' and restricted forms of finance that usually come from donors leave very little room for flexibility and investments into capacity building, systems, structures and processes that provide the building blocks for sustainability. As the GTLC and the Afrikids cases show, social enterprise and hybrid models can play a significant role in generating unrestricted income which can be useful to drive the mission of organisations. Invariably, the three models presented here can increase the autonomy of organisations, decrease dependency on donors (both financial and programmatic) and strengthen their capacity to overcome changes characterising external and donor funds.

Secondly, these models, particularly social enterprise and micro-credits, have strong potentials for enhancing the influential power of civil society and legitimacy from constituents. The foregoing discussion has already made the case that legitimacy and influential power are two of the various indicators providing lenses for sustainability. Social enterprises and micro-credits, as observed in the case

of SEND Ghana and the GTLC approach, can create economic opportunities that develop markets for small and underprivileged economic activities, foster self-employment and also enable people to attain economic security for themselves and their families. By contributing to their economic activities, these 'beneficiaries' can be important actors that can enhance the legitimacy and influential power of CSOs. For instance, SENDFINGO (of SEND-Ghana) made diverse contributions to over 20,000 clients in 2012 alone. These clients present a formidable constituent for the sustainability strategy of SEND GHANA. Other potentials of the three models include improved (clientele) service and targeting of those who value the services provided by civil society, cost-reduction to 'customers' or the target constituent when prices are set below going market rates. What we also found through this study was that the achievement of these potentials is predicated on a myriad of factors. Here, we highlight few of them.

1. Getting your niche right!

There are diverse sets of activities that CSOs can implement as social enterprises or business ventures. Venturing into social enterprise or purely-profit making subsidiaries as a way of sustainability requires a clear identification of a market-what is often termed as a niche. Generally, market and state failure can create niches for social

² While recognising the several potentials and benefits of each model, our focus was on how they can facilitate sustainability as conceptualised in this report.

enterprise and investment into business ventures including serving disadvantaged communities through supply of agro-chemicals (in the case of GTLC), provision and management of public infrastructure (such as the medical facilities of Afrikids), and even creating environmental benefits. Getting the niche right is intrinsic to the success of the social enterprise or business ventures that may be considered. Without a clear niche, transforming into social enterprise and business ventures to boost sustainability profile might fail.

2. Don't just join the crowd; business planning is key

In both the cases of GTLC and Afrikids, we have seen how the importance of business planning including cost-benefit analysis, profit analysis, market analysis and social analysis can bring a clearer picture of the cost and dynamics of the investment decision. Having clearly identified a niche, questions about where and on what scale to implement the social enterprise, how, when, to do so and to whom it will apply are all important questions that need clarification in planning the business. A successful social enterprise or business venture will not only depend on the idea or the niche. It will also depend on investment in 'soft assets' such as the business plan, clarification of vision and clear management. Not only does planning provide a fertile ground for its success, it also attracts financial resources, both locally and internationally to sustain operations as witnessed in both the GTLC and Afrikids cases.

3. Leadership Matters

The passion with which leaders pursue and communicate ideas of social enterprise, micro-credit and business ventures matters. This passion facilitates a clear identification of a niche, the targeting of the right market and 'customers' and formation of alliances along the way. The nature and quality of leadership also matters for the kind support, alliances and obstacles or oppositions that projects can face.

4. Embracing the dualism required of a social enterprise

Doing social good and making money might not be easy. This is even true for cases where organisations have for a long term practiced as (free) service providers. Capacity building including gaining critical skills for marketing and profit-oriented management skills can facilitate the potentials of social enterprise, business ventures and micro-credits.

5. Government support?

The support of government and state institutions — financial or non-financial — can also play a role in supporting social enterprises, business ventures or even micro-credits. For instance, in the Afrikids case, the recognition and support granted to the medical facilities provide it with a credible image which facilitates its operations.



References

- Afrikids (2011). Annual Report 2011. Available at: <http://www.afrikids.org/>
- Afrikids (2012). Annual Report 2012. Available at: http://www.afrikids.org/downloads/AfriKids_Annual_Rep_2012.pdf
- Afrikids (2013). Annual Report 2013. Available at: <http://www.afrikids.org/>
- Afrikids (2014). Annual Report 2014. Available at: <http://www.afrikids.org/>
- Alter, S.K. (2006). Social Enterprise Models and Their Mission and Money Relationships. In: A. Nicholls, ed. Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change. pp. 205-231.
- Atuguba, R. (2013) Civil Society and Development in West Africa: Ghana Civil Society Paper 28 February 2013
- Badejogbin, O. (2014). New Imperatives for Sustainability in a Developing Economy's Civil Society Sector: A Case Study of Nigeria, WAC Series Quarterly Monograph, Vol. 4 No. 1 July 2014, West Africa Civil Society Institute WACSI, Accra.
- Benton & Monroy (2004), Business Approaches for the Reproductive Health NGO. Accessed from http://www.shopsproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/2347_file_CMS_NGOSustainability.pdf
- Bridge, S., Murtagh, B., & O'Neill, K. (2009). Understanding the Social Economy and the Third Sector. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Brown, L. D., & Jagadananda, L. (2007). Civil society legitimacy and accountability: Issues and challenges. Centre for Youth & Social Development
- CIVICUS (2012). 2011 State of Civil Society Report. Available at: <http://socs.civicus.org/2011/> (accessed on 22 March 2015)
- CIVICUS (2014). State of Civil Society Report 2013: Creating an enabling environment. Available at: http://socs.civicus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2013StateofCivilSocietyReport_full.pdf (accessed on 22 March 2015)
- CIVICUS (2015). 2014 State of Civil Society Report: Reimagining Global Governance Available at: <http://civicus.org/images/stories/SOCS%202014.pdf> (accessed on 22 March 2015)
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2007). Designing and conducting mixed methods research. Thousands Oak CA: Sage

Darkwa, A., Amponsah, N., & Gyampoh, E. (2006). Civil Society in a Changing Ghana. An Assessment of the Current State Of Civil Society In Ghana, accessible at http://www.civicus.org/new/media/CSI_Ghana_Country_Report.pdf

Dees, J.G and Anderson B.B., (2006). Framing a Theory of Social Entrepreneurship: Building on Two Schools of Thought. In: Association for Research on Nonprofit Organisations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), ed. Research on Social Entrepreneurship: Understanding and Contributing to an Emerging Field. pp. 39-66

Dees, J. G. Emerson, J. & Economy, P. (2001). Enterprising Nonprofits: A Toolkit for Social Entrepreneurs. New York: Wiley and Sons Inc.

Downie, S. & Kingsbury, D. (2001). Political Development and the Re-Emergence of Civil Society in Cambodia. Contemporary Southeast Asia, 23(1).

DTI. (2002). Social Enterprises, A Strategy for Success. London: Department of Trade and Industry.

Griffin-EL, E. and Darko, Emily (2014). A case study of health and agriculture social enterprises in Kenya. Available at <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8876.pdf>

Edwards, M. (2009). Civil society. Polity: Cambridge.

Edwards, M. and Gaventa, J. (2014). Global Citizen Action: London: Earthscan

Florini, A. M. (Ed.). (2000). Third Force, the Rise of Transnational Civil Society. Carnegie Endowment.

GACC, WACSI and CIVICUS (2014). The state of civil society in Ghana: An assessment. Accessible at: http://www.wacsi.org/attachment/388/Ghana%20CSI-RA%20report.pdf?g_download=1.

Ghanaian Times News Story, 2011 titled "Social Welfare Department Registers 4,920 NGOs"

Gilchrist, V. J. (1992). Key informant interviews.

Hawken, P. (2007). Blessed unrest: How the largest social movement in history is restoring grace, justice, and beauty to the world. Penguin.

Hailey, J. (2014). Models of INGO Sustainability: Balancing Restricted and Unrestricted Funding. INTRAC Briefing Paper 41. Available at: <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/827/NGO-SUSTAINABILITY-Hailey-INTRAC-Briefing-Paper-41-2014.pdf>

Hutchinson, K. A. (2007). Mapping the Dynamics of Social Enterprises & ICTs in



Cambodia: A Study of Perception, Use and Benefit of ICT in Development of the Social Enterprise Space, Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business, RMIT University: Melbourne. Retrieved 13th January 2015 from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/32387467/Mappingthe-Dynamics-use-of-ict-in-cambodia>

ISODEC (2005). Directory of NGOs in Ghana. ISODEC: Accra.

Johnson, PD (2007). Diaspora Philanthropy: Influences, Initiatives and Issues <https://www.cbd.int/financial/charity/usa-diasporaphilanthropy.pdf>

Kendall, J. (2009). Losing Political Innocence? Finding a Place for Ideology in Understanding the Development of Recent English Third Sector Policy: Third Sector Research Centre, Working Paper 13.

Leadbeater, C. (2007) Social Enterprise and Social Innovation: Strategies for the Next Ten Years: A Social Enterprise Think Piece for the Office of the Third Sector HMRC Cabinet Office: Office of the Third Sector. London

Kline, P. (1993). Personality: The psychometric view. London: Routledge.

Kumar, K. (1989). Conducting key informant interviews in developing countries. Washington DC: Agency for International Development.

Leadbeater, C. (2007) Social Enterprise and Social Innovation: Strategies for the Next Ten Years: A Social Enterprise Think Piece for the Office of the Third Sector HMRC Cabinet Office: Office of the Third Sector. London.

Lewis, S. Boateng, A. and Hayman, R. (2015). Building sustainability of civil society Debates, challenges and moving forward. Available at: <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/831/Debates-challenges-and-moving-forward.pdf> (accessed on 22 March 2015)

McDonald, J. D. (2008). Measuring personality constructs: The advantages and disadvantages of self-reports, informant reports and behavioural assessments. *Enquire*, 1(1), 1-19.

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2010). Ghana Aid Policy and Strategy 2011-2015: Towards Middle Income Status (Phase One). Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning: Government of Republic of Ghana. Available from: http://ghana.undp.org/en/media/Ghana/Documents/GHANA_AID_POLICY_STRATEGY_FINAL_DRAFT_1.ashx.

Moss, T and Majerowicz, S. (2012). No Longer Poor: Ghana's New Income Status and Implications of Graduation from IDA: Centre for Global Development. Accessed from

http://www.cgdev.org/files/1426321_file_Moss_Majerowicz_Ghana_FINAL.pdf

Mutua, M. [1997]. African human rights NGOs: Questions of context and legitimacy. *Africa Legal Aid*. July to September, pp. 9-13.

Panum, K. and Hansen, M.W (2014). Successful Social Enterprises in Africa: Case Studies of Six Social Enterprises. CBDS Working Paper Series Working Paper No. 02

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Paulhus, D. L., & Vazire, S. (2007). The self-report method. In R. W. Robins, R.C. Fraley & R.F. Krueger (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in personality psychology* (pp. 224-239). London: The Guilford Press.

Porter, M.E. and Kramer M.R., (2006). Strategy and society: the link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(12), pp. 78-92.

PRIA, CDRA, PSO, INTRAC, EASUN, ICD (2012). Civil Society@ Crossroads: Shifts, Challenges, Options? Available on: <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/757/Civil-society-at-a-Crossroads-Global-Synthesis-Report.pdf>

SEND-Ghana (2008). Annual Report: 2008

SEND-Ghana (2010). 2010 Annual Report

SEND-Ghana (2012). 2013Annual Report

Smith, W. and Darko, E. (2014). Social enterprise: constraints and opportunities – evidence from Vietnam and Kenya. <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8877.pdf>

Teasdale, S. (2010) What's in a name? The construction of social enterprise. Paper presented to Public Administration Committee (PAC) Conference, Nottingham Trent University, and 8th September 2010. Available at: http://www.ntu.ac.uk/nbs/document_uploads/99669.pdf

United States Agency for International Development (USAID), (2011). Fundamentals of NGO Financial Sustainability. Washington D.C.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID), (2009). NGO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa. 2009 Report. Washington D.C. <http://www.usaid.gov> (Accessed, 08 December 2014)

USAID (2012). The 2012 CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa <http://www.usaid.gov>



usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/CSOSI_AFR_2012.pdf (accessed on 10 December 2014)

USAID (2014). The 2013 CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa Available at: http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/2013_Africa_CSOSI.pdf (accessed on 10 December 2014).

Vandyck, C. K. (2014). "Survival Is Not Enough: Building Capacity for a Thriving Civil Society in West Africa," INTRAC, Praxis Notes, June 2014, Available at: <http://www.intrac.org/resources.php?action=resource&id=803>.

WEF (2013) The Future Role of Civil Society," The Future Role of Civil Society | World Economic Forum, accessed 7 January, 2015, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FutureRoleCivilSociety_Report_2013.pdf

Annex 1:

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Albert A Arhin is a trained policy analyst and a development practitioner interested in social development, civil society activism, sustainability and natural resource governance. He has more than 10 years' cumulative professional experience in international development consultancy and research, strategy reviews, projects/policy planning, monitoring and evaluation. He is currently completing his PHD studies at the University of Cambridge, UK as a Gates Scholar. He has a BSc in Planning (first class honours) from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana. He also studied as a Commonwealth Scholar for a master's degree (Distinction) in Sustainability (Environment and Development) at the University of Leeds, UK.

Mohammed-Anwar Sadat Adam is a Development Practitioner, Researcher, and Consultant with over decade experience in governance, development policy research, civil society activism and practice, development evaluation, social accountability, campaigning and advocacy for policy influencing and reform processes. He has led and worked in several interdisciplinary teams to carry out organisational capacity assessments, strengthening parliamentary oversight capacity, development policy research, training and consultancy on governance, gender, and development planning and management for both national and international development agencies. He holds MA in Development Studies from the University of Ghana, Legon and BA in Integrated Development Studies from the University for Development Studies, Ghana and a Certificate in Community Development (Distinction) from Trent University.

Achaligabe Colson Akanbasiam had his Bachelor's of Arts Degree from University of Ghana. He obtained his Master of Philosophy Degree in Gender and Development from University of Bergen, Norway. Mr. Akanbasiam has interest and expertise in development work, advocacy and research. He has worked in different capacities in a couple of organisations and institutions. Again, he has conducted research works and made presentations. As result of these exposures, he has significant expertise and interest in issues of gender and poverty reduction; and social protection programmes including social cash transfer and microfinance. Currently, Mr Akanbasiam is the Beneficiary Services Co-ordinator of the Government of Ghana social cash transfer programme (called LEAP) under the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. As the co-ordinator, he is responsible for quality control and assurance of the LEAP programme. He believes in social justices, gender equality and social transformation.



Annex 2

1. Computation of CSSI. Full datasets is available at: <http://bit.ly/csossustainability>

Average Scores for the Dimensions and Criteria of sustainability

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY		
	Average Score	Sustainable Score
Income Mobilisation and Generation	2.25	4
Financial Planning	2	4
Sound financial management systems	3	4
Average	2.4	

OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY		
	Average Score	
Recognition and Visibility	2.6	4
Operating Space	2.8	4
Institutional infrastructure	2.25	4
Influential Power	3	4
Quality and continuity of programmes	2.25	4
Average	2.6	

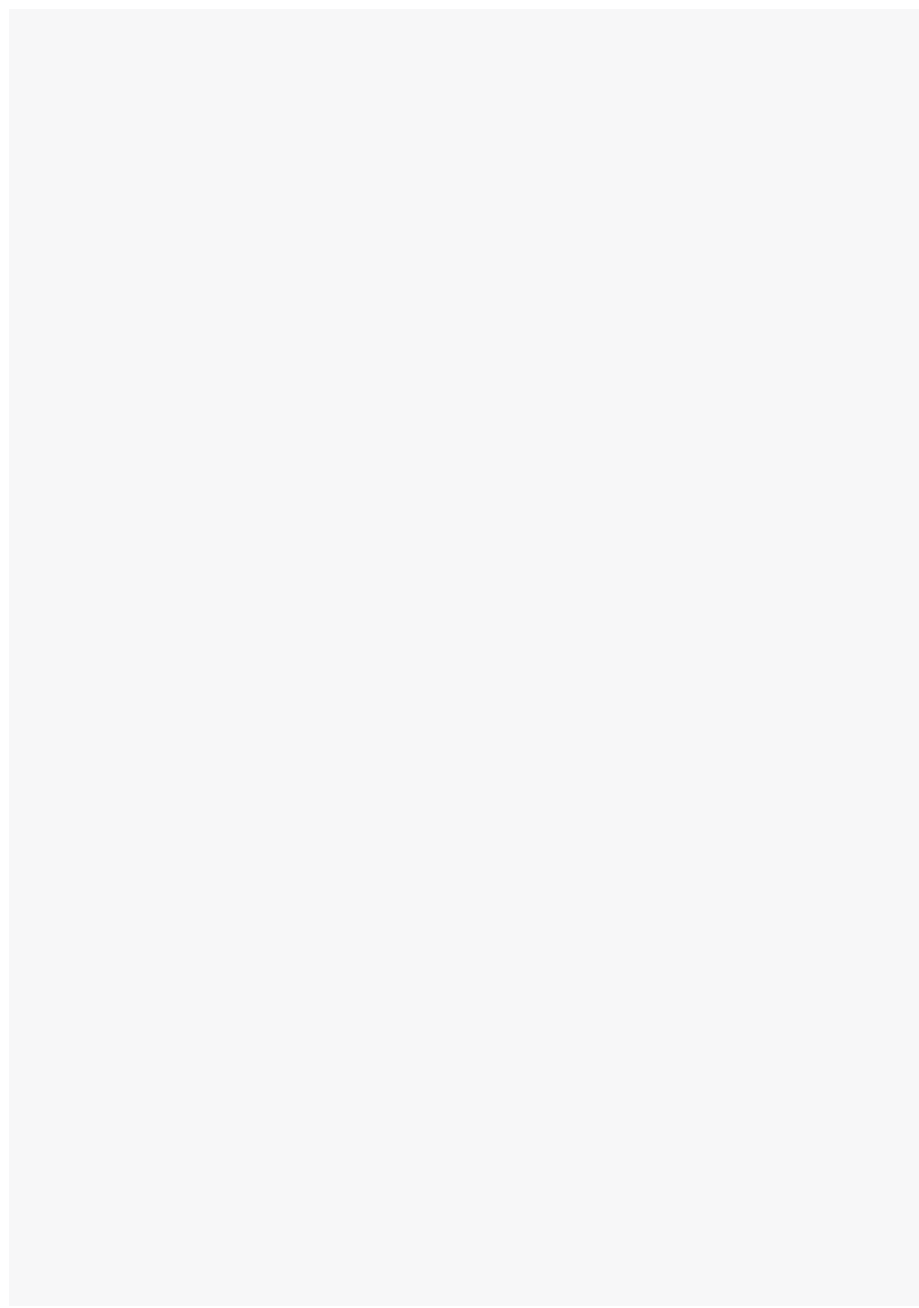
IDENTITY SUSTAINABILITY		
	Average Score	
Relevance of Mission	4	4
Governance and Leadership	3	4
legitimacy and accountable systems	2.7	4
policy and regulatory environment	3	4
Average	3.2	4

INTERVENTIONS SUSTAINABILITY

	Average Score	
Ownership of projects	3	4
Results Communication	2	4
Partnership	3	4
Average Score	2.7	4

SUMMARY

Financial Sustainability	2.4	
Operational Sustainability	2.6	
Identity Sustainability	3.1	4
Intervention Sustainability	2.7	4



West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)

No. 9, Bingo Street, East Legon

P. O. Box AT 1956, Achimota

Accra, Ghana

E-mail: info@wacsi.org

Tel: +233 (0) 303 937 264